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II.

PANORAMA OF ST. PETERSBURG.





PANORAMA  
OF  
ST. PETERSBURG.

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## PANORAMA OF ST. PETERSBURG.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

FORMED in early antiquity, and crystallised during the barbarism of the middle ages, our cities, with their narrow streets and many-cornered houses, with the hereditary inconveniences and anomalies of their architecture, look often like so many labyrinths of stone, in which chance alone disposed the dwellings; but in St. Petersburg, the offspring of a more enlightened age, everything is arranged orderly and conveniently: the streets are broad, the open spaces regular, and the houses roomy. The fifty square versts destined for the Russian capital allowed every house a sufficient extent of ground. In our old German towns, tall distorted buildings seem everywhere squeezing each other out of shape, and panting, as it were, for want of room to breathe in; whereas in St. Petersburg every house has an individuality of its own, and stands boldly forth from the mass. Yet St. Petersburg is anything but a picturesque city. All is airy and light. There is no shade about the picture, no variety of tone. Everything is so convenient, so good-looking, so sensibly arranged, and so very modern, that Canaletto would have found it hard to have obtained for his canvass a single poetical tableau such as would have presented itself to him at every corner in our German cities, so rich in contrasts, recollections, and variegated life. The streets in St. Petersburg are so broad, the open places so vast, the arms of the river so mighty, that, large as the houses are in themselves, they are made to appear small by the gigantic plan of the whole. This effect is increased by the extreme flatness of the site on which the city stands. No building is raised above the other. Masses of architecture, worthy of mountains for their pedestals, are ranged side by side in endless lines. Nowhere gratified,

then, by elevation or grouping, the eye wanders over a monotonous sea of undulating palaces.

The sameness of aspect is at no time more striking than in winter, when the streets, the river, and the houses are covered with one white. The white walls of the buildings seem to have no hold upon the ground, and the Palmyra of the north under her leaden sky, looks rather like the shadow than the substance of a city. There are things in nature pleasing to the eye, and gratifying to think of, and yet anything but picturesque, and one of these is St. Petersburg.

No other place, however, undergoes a more interesting change in spring, when the sky clears up, and the sun removes the pershroud from the roofs and the waters. The houses seem to cover a firm footing on the ground; the lively green of the plain roofs, and the azure, star-spangled cupolas of the churches, with their gilt spires, throw off their monotonous icy covering; the eye revels again in the long-untasted enjoyment of colour: the river, divested of its wintry garment, flows again in unrolled majesty, and gaily mirrors the palaces ranged along its banks.

As the city presents no elevated point, the spectator, to see must elevate himself, and for this purpose there is no place better suited than the tower of the Admiralty, from which the principal streets diverge, and near which the great arms of the river seem to meet. This tower is provided with a series of galleries, and the delightful views from those galleries on a fine spring day are not easily matched in any other city.

At the foot of the tower the inner yards of the Admiralty present themselves. There the timber from the forests of Vologda and Kostroma lies piled in huge heaps, and mighty ships of war are growing into life under the busy hands of swarms of workmen. On the other side lie the splendid squares or *plokhtsh* of the Admiralty, of Peter, and of the court, along the sides of which are grouped the chief buildings of the capital. The *Hôtel de l'Etat* Major, whence Russia's million of soldiers receive their orders; the Senate-house, and the Palace of the Holy Synod, in which the *men* and *tum*, the believing and rejecting, the temporal and the spiritual concerns of a hundred nations, are discussed and determined; St. Isaac's Church, with its profusion of columns, in which each stone is of colossal magnitude; the War office, where a thousand pens ply their peaceful labours in the service of Mars; and the mighty Winter Palace, in a corner of which dwells the great man to whom one-tenth of the human race look up with hope or anxiety, and whose name is prized and dreaded, beyond any other, over one-half the surface of our globe.

The length of the open spaces bordered by the public buildings just mentioned is not much less than an English mile; and the spectacles, metamorphoses, *tableaux vivans*, and *ombres Chinoises*, which daily and hourly present themselves to the spectator when

keeps watch upon the tower of the Admiralty, are as varied as they are magnificent and interesting. At one extremity, near the Senate and the Synod, stands the colossal equestrian statue of Peter the Great, trampling underfoot the dragon of barbarism, and ever ready to dash off at a full gallop from the rock, from the summit of which his charger appears to be in the act of springing. The heads of the state and of the church—metropolitans, senators, bishops, and judges—are constantly arriving and departing, their equipages keeping up an incessant movement around the immortal Peter. At the other extremity rises the smooth and polished monolith of the "Restorer of Peace to the World," on the summit of which stands the archangel with the cross of peace, while at its foot the rattling of imperial equipages scarcely ceases for a moment. Field-marsbals, generals, governors, and gentlemen of the court, are constantly coming and going. Priestly processions, military parades, pompous equipages, and funeral trains, are thronging by at every hour of the day, and the drums and fife are rarely silent, but continue, at brief intervals, to announce that a mighty man of the earth has just passed by.

To the south of the Admiralty the most important part of the city unfolds itself, the *Bolshaia Storona*, or Great Side. Towards the west lies *Vasiliefskoi Ostrof*, or *Basilius Island*, with its beautiful Exchange, its Academy of Sciences, and its University. To the north is seen the *Petersburgskaia Storona*, or Petersburg Side, with its citadel stretching out into the Neva; and towards the east arise the barracks and factories of the *Viborg Side*.

These are the four principal divisions of the city, formed by the Great and Little Neva, and by the Great Neffa. The Great Side comprises by far the most important portion of the capital, with the court, the nobility, and more than half the population. The least important is the *Viborg Side*, inhabited chiefly by gardeners, soldiers, and manufacturers. It is rapidly extending, however, for nowhere else in St. Petersburg are building speculations going on to a larger extent. The *Basilius Island*, Commerce appears to have selected for her especial residence, and the Muses have raised their temple by the side of Mercury's. The *Petersburg Side*, a low and marshy island, remarkable chiefly for its fortress or citadel, whose rayon drives the houses from the river-side, is inhabited by the poorer classes of the population, and has already assumed much of the character of a metropolitan faubourg.

The closely-built masses of the Great Side, closely built in comparison with the other quarters of the city, are divided into three semicircular divisions by the *Moika*, the *St. Catherine*, and the *Fontanka Canals*. These divisions are called the *First*, *Second*, and *Third Admiralty sections*, and are again subdivided by the three principal streets diverging from the Admiralty: the *Neva Perspective* (*Nevskoi Prospekt*); the *Peas Street* (*Gorok-*

hovaia Oulitza); and the Resurrection Perspective (Vosnosenskoï Prospekt).

As these three principal streets meet at the foot of the Admiralty Tower, a man, taking his position at this central point, may look down them, and, with the aid of a good telescope, see what is going on in the most remote quarters of the city. The direction of these three streets and of the canals determines that of most of the other streets. Of these the most remarkable are the Great and Little Morskaia, the Great and Little Millionava, the Mesh-tshanskaia, and the Sadovaia or Garden Street. All the streets without exception are broad and convenient, blind alleys and narrow lanes being wholly unknown. They are classed, indeed, into prospekts, oulitzis, and perouloks, or cross streets; but even these perouloks would, in any of our older towns, be thought quite spacious enough for main streets. Every street has two names, a German and a Russian.

Beyond the Fontanka, along whose banks are ranged a succession of palaces, lie the more remote portions of the city; and beyond these, bordering on the swamps of Ingermanland, may be dimly seen, through the mists of the horizon, the suburbs on the Ligofka and Zagurodnoi Canals, together with the suburban villages of Great and Little Okhta. Even these remote quarters, peopled by yemishlishiks, plotniks, and mushiks,\* bear no resemblance to the wretched abodes of poverty in most of our European cities. There are in London and Paris, and even in many German cities, quarters that seem the chosen domain of famine and misery, and where a filthy, ragged, insolent, and demoralized race of beings are crowded into houses as dirty, as dilapidated, and as repulsive as themselves. Not so in St. Petersburg. Beggars, rag-gatherers, and half-naked cripples, are nowhere to be seen in the city graced by the imperial residence. Indeed, in none of the large cities of Russia is there to be seen a street population such as we have just described. Of this, the state of serfage in which the lower class live is the cause. The poor are all in a condition of dependence; and that very dependence, while it impedes the workman in his attempts to raise himself, prevents the possibility of his falling so low as may sometimes be the case with a free labourer. In no city of Russia do we see the wretched hovels of poverty offering a painful contrast to the mansions of the wealthy, as may be seen in almost every city of Western Europe. The suburbs of St. Petersburg, where dwell the labouring classes, or the black people, as they are there called, have a desolate and uninviting air: still there is nothing repulsive or disgusting in them.

The roofs in St. Petersburg are generally flat, and few houses can boast of more than two floors; indeed, the majority have only one, particularly in the remoter quarters. Even in the heart of

\* Waggoners, carpenters, and peasants.

the town many one-floored houses are seen, and houses of three or four floors are to be met with only in the three Admiralty sections. Now that ground-rents have risen so much, and the town is stretching itself out in every direction, loftier houses are beginning to be built, and additional floors are in some places erected over those that already exist. While I was in St. Petersburg, some hundreds of houses underwent the process of having their roofs taken off for the purpose of having additional floors added.

In the same way that the three *prospekts* diverge from the Admiralty tower towards the south, the several arms of the Neva stretch away towards the north; and when the stranger with his telescope is tired of watching the dashing equipages on the one side, he may turn and contemplate the ships and gondolas on the other. Bridges there are but few over the Neva; and a man would, therefore, often have to go a round of several versts when he wanted to cross the river, were there not all along the banks a multitude of boats ready, for a few copecks, to convey him to the other side. These boats are mostly uncovered, and are rowed by two men. Covered boats, however, with six, ten, and even twelve rowers, are not wanting. The watermen ply their calling with much dexterity, and sometimes even entertain their passengers with songs and music. The court, the ministers, the nobles, and many of the public institutions, have their private barges, richly ornamented, and rowed by men in handsome liveries. The canals and the several arms of the Neva are as much animated by these boats as the streets by equipages; and on Sundays, little fleets may be seen gliding away to the enchanted islands that form the favourite resort for amusement to the citizens of the Russian capital.

In the spacious arms of the Neva, the ships of war, as well as the merchant vessels, find a spacious anchorage: they are not, therefore, crowded together, as is the case in some large maritime places, but lie grouped and scattered along the quays. These quays, again, are bordered by noble buildings: by the sumptuous mansion of the English Quay, by a range of palaces on Vassili Ostrof Quay, by the Exchange, the Corps\* of Cadets, the Academy of Sciences, the University, the Academy of Arts, the Corps of Cadets of the Mines, &c. All these buildings are pompous and of vast extent.

\* *The Kadetskoi Korpus.* The Russians apply the word "corps" not only to the young gentlemen themselves, but likewise to the building that serves them as a residence.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF ST. PETERSBURG.

No modern city can boast that it is so entirely composed of palaces and colossal buildings as St. Petersburg. Even the dwellings of the poor have a show of magnificence about them. There are several houses in the town in which thousands of human beings have their residence. The Winter Palace, for instance, has six thousand inhabitants; in the Infantry Hospital, four thousand beds are made up; in the Foundling Hospital, there are seven thousand children; and in the Corps of Cadets there are some thousands of those young gentlemen. There are single houses from which their owners derive princely revenues. Of many the annual rental exceeds fifty thousand rubles, of some one hundred thousand. The ground which is occupied by the Corps of Cadets forms a square of which each side is about a quarter of an English mile in length. There are other buildings, such as the Admiralty, the Hotel de l'Etat Major, the Tauride Palace, &c. that occupy ground enough for a small town. Then come buildings of a second rank, such as the Smolnoi Convent, the Neva Convent, the Commercial Bank; several hospitals and barracks; the hemp, tallow, and other magazines; the Custom-house; the Senate; the Synod; the Marble Palace; the Imperial Stables; and the old palace of the Grand Duke Michael. Next come what may be called the buildings of a third rank: the large theatres, the large churches, the smaller hospitals, &c.

Among the private houses also are some of enormous extent. I knew one of which the ground-floor, on one side, was occupied by a public bazaar, in which thousands of the necessities and conveniences of life were offered for sale. On the other side, a multitude of German, English, and French mechanics and tradesmen had hung out their signs. On the first floor dwelt two senators, and the families of various other persons of distinction. On the second floor was a school of very high repute, and a host of academicians, teachers, and professors, dwelt there with their families. In the back part of the building, not to talk of a multitude of obscure personages, there resided several colonels and majors, a few retired generals, an Armenian priest, and a German pastor. Had all the rest of St. Petersburg gone to the ground, and this house alone remained, its inhabitants would have sufficed for the formation of a little political community of their own, in which every rank in society would have had its representatives. When such a house is burnt down, two hundred families at once become roofless. To seek any one in such a house is a real trial of patience. Ask the *butshnik* (the police-

man at the corner of the street), and he will tell you perhaps that his knowledge extends only to the one side of the house, but that the names of those who live in the other half are unknown to him. There are so many holes and corners in such a house, that even those who dwell in it are unable to tell you the names of all the inmates; and no man thinks another his neighbour, merely because they happen to live under the same roof. Many of these houses look unpretending enough when seen from the street, to which they always turn their smallest side; but enter the *podyasde* or gateway, and you are astonished at the succession of side-buildings and back-buildings, of passages and courts, some of the latter large enough to review a regiment of cavalry in them.

Few of the houses in St. Petersburg, it has already been observed, exceed two floors in height, except in a few of the most central streets. A speculator some time ago built several houses of three stories, in one of the cross streets of Vassili Ostrof, and was completely ruined by the undertaking, for he could find no tenant who was willing to mount so high. On the other hand, even in the central part of the city, there are not a few houses, of not more than one floor in height, belonging to wealthy individuals, who in the spirit of their national predilection spread themselves out upon the ground, whereas a house of two stories containing the same number of rooms would only cost them half as much. The Russians have as great a partiality for wooden houses as for low houses, and perhaps with more reason. To a Russian particularly, a wooden house holds out a multitude of recommendations. Firstly, wood is more easily fashioned into the wished-for shape than stone; and then a wooden house is more quickly built, costs less, and is much warmer. The government discourages the erection of wooden houses in many ways; nevertheless, the majority of the houses in St. Petersburg, perhaps two-thirds, are still of wood.

The building of a house is a much more costly undertaking in St. Petersburg than in any other part of Russia. Provisions are dear, and the price of labour always comparatively high. Then the ground brings often enormously high prices. There are private houses, the mere ground of which is valued at two hundred thousand rubles; a sum for which, in other parts of the empire, a man might buy an estate of several square leagues, with houses, woods, rivers, and lakes, and all the eagles, bears, wolves, oxen, and human creatures that inhabit them. In particularly favourable situations for business, as much as one thousand rubles a-year has been paid by way of rent for every window looking out into the street. The next thing that renders building so costly is the difficulty of obtaining a solid foundation. The spongy, marshy nature of the soil makes it necessary for the builder to begin by constructing a strong scaffolding under ground, before he can think of rearing one over it. Every building of

any size rests on piles, and would vanish like a stage ghost, were it not for the enormous beams that furnish it support. Such is the pedestal on which stands the citadel with all its walls; and even the quays along the river-side, the foot pavements, and the framework of the canals, must be secured in a similar way. The foundation alone for the Isaac's Church cost upwards of a million of rubles: a sum for which a magnificent church might have been finished in most countries. Even with all this costly precaution, the builders do not always succeed in getting a solid basis to build on. After the inundation of 1824, the walls, in many houses, burst asunder, in consequence of the foundation having given way. The English Palace, as it is called, which lies on the road to Peterhof, has fairly separated from the steps leading up to it: either the palace has drawn itself back one way, or the steps the other. On all the fine quays the blocks of granite of which they are formed have settled more or less, and the street pavement in Spring may be said to approach to a state of solution: when carriages drive over it the ground shakes like a bog, and in many places the stones rise up or sink into the earth, forming often the most dangerous holes.

Pine logs, laid horizontally on each other, furnish the usual material for the construction of the wooden houses. Stone houses are built either of bricks or of Finland granite. The brick walls are of extraordinary thickness. In our part of Europe we have frequent occasion to wonder at the great height to which our architects venture to run up their thin walls; in Russia the wonder is reversed, for it is astonishing to see the thickness given to walls intended for so trifling an elevation. Five or six feet is no unusual thickness for a brick wall in St. Petersburg. Granite is less suitable to architectural ornaments than marble, and is but little used by the Russians, who seldom care much for the solidity or durability of their constructions. A handsome outside, and pompous and spacious rooms, are the chief desiderata. Wood is the favourite material, and where this is forbidden by the police, bricks are resorted to. Still, upon the whole, a huge quantity of granite has found its way from the Finnish swamps to the banks of the Neva, since St. Petersburg was founded;\* and mighty blocks that had probably lain imbedded in the marshes for thousands of years, now display themselves proudly in the capital of the Czars, in the shape of monoliths, pillars, caryatides, pedestals, &c. The airy sylphs of St. Petersburg, however, seem to have conspired, as much as the gnomes of the earth, against the architects of the city. It is quite afflicting to see how much the fine granite monuments frequently suffer from the effects of the atmosphere. The frosts of winter

\* Some idea may be formed of the immense quantity of granite brought to St. Petersburg, from the fact that the granite quays which enclose the river and the canals occupy alone a length of nearly twenty English miles.

are particularly destructive. The moisture that finds its way during autumn into the pores of the stones, freezes in winter, and some of the largest stones are then rent and torn, and on the return of spring fall asunder.

The Russian aristocracy, in general, do not reside in the central part of the town, in the vicinity of the imperial palace. They have been banished thence by the invasion of industry and the bustle of trade. It is in the Litanaia, and along the sides of the Fontanka Canal, particularly the eastern end of it, that the most fashionable residences will be found. It is there that may be seen the palaces of the Kotshubeys, the Sheremetievs, the Branizkis, the Narishkins, the chancellors of the empire, the ministers, the grandes, and the millionaires, on ground where a century ago nothing met the eye but a few huts tenanted by Ingrian fishermen. A quiet and magnificent street has since arisen there; and the Orloffs, the Dolgorukis, the Stroganoffs, &c. have, it must be owned, displayed taste and judgment in their choice of a quarter wherein to erect their sumptuous dwellings.

The rapidity with which buildings are run up in St. Petersburg is truly astonishing. This is partly owing to the shortness of the season during which building operations can be carried on, but partly also to the characteristic impatience of the Russians to see the termination of a work they have once commenced. The new Winter Palace is one of the most striking examples of this. Within one year not less than twenty millions of rubles were expended upon the building. The operations were not even allowed to suffer interruption from the frosts of winter, but fires were kept burning everywhere to prevent the materials from freezing, and to dry the walls. The same system has been acted on with respect to many of the private mansions of the nobility. Palaces, in short, are put together with a rapidity that can be compared only to that with which theatrical decorations are arranged. This very rapidity, however, will make the city a more easy meal for old Father Time to devour at a fitting season. He will have ground the brittle column of bricks and mortar to powder, some thousands of years before his teeth will have been able to make an impression on some of the monuments of Egypt. The Russians build only to prepare ruins. Indeed, it is painful in most of their cities to see the early decrepitude of so many buildings of recent erection. They furnish a suitable picture of the precocious civilization of the empire. It must, at the same time, be admitted, that similar remarks will apply to the modern architecture of other parts of Europe.

Among the most magnificent ornaments of the mansions of St. Petersburg must not be forgotten the splendid plate glass of their windows. In most of the aristocratic saloons there is at least one large window composed of a single pane of glass, round which the ladies delight to range their work-tables, and their

ottomans, whence they gaze out upon the animated *tableaux vivans* of the street. In some houses every window is fitted up on the same plan. They ought not, however, to be permitted on the ground-floor; for a poor milkmaid, or a porter with a load, passing by one of these costly windows, may be ruined by a single *faux pas*.

There is always a great desire shown to avoid architectural disfigurement. A Grecian temple, or some other fanciful decoration, when more closely examined, often turns out to be nothing but a set of painted boards, intended to mask some object not likely to please the eye. Sometimes, to give a more stately look to a one-floored house, the owner will place upon the roof the complete façade of an additional story, which, on nearer inspection, is found to be nothing but a mere wall with sham windows, the whole being fastened to the rest of the house with massive iron bars. Simulated floors of this kind may sometimes have been the work of the police, who occasionally order double-floored houses to be built in certain streets for the sake of uniformity; but the same thing may be met with in all parts of Russia and Poland, and seems perfectly suited to the character of the Slavonian nations, who are always more ready to promise than perform. Even the scaffolding around a house undergoing repair must be closed up with boards, and these boards are painted over with doors and windows, to cheat the eye into a belief that they compose the front of a *bonâ fide* house. To see the profusion of pillars and porticoes expended on most of the St. Petersburg houses, a stranger might imagine himself in Greece or Italy; but you look in vain for the Peripatetics that should wander along these stately halls, or for the Epicureans that ought to be sunning themselves there. Drifts of snow and piercing north winds howl among these Ausonian retreats during the greater part of the year, and make them as little suited for voluptuous loungers as the stately balconies that are everywhere seen empty and deserted.

A Russian is easily tempted to make changes in his house, and the consequence is, that an abundance of building and unbuilding is at all times going on in St. Petersburg. A single dinner or a ball often causes a house to put on a new face. To augment the suite of rooms, a hole will perhaps be broken in a wall, and some additional apartments thus be gained, or a temporary room will be built over the balcony. The house of a genuine Russian rarely remains fourteen days without undergoing some change. Caprice or *ennui* will seldom allow him to sleep a fortnight in the same chamber; the dining-room and the nursery will every now and then be made to change places, the drawing-room will be converted into a dormitory, and the school-room into a gaily-decorated temple for Terpsichore. The Russians are essentially a nomadic race. The wealthier among them seldom spend a year without wandering to the

extremity of their vast empire; and where circumstances deny them this enjoyment, they will find means to indulge their moving propensities, though it be only within the walls of their own houses. The police, also, is responsible for some of the modifications which the houses of St. Petersburg are constantly undergoing; for the police is exceedingly fickle in its tastes and partialities. Sometimes it prohibits this or that form of window; sometimes it orders that all doors shall be of a certain description of wood; sometimes it will allow of trapdoors to cellars; and sometimes it will order them all to be removed at a day's notice.

The pavement of St. Petersburg, owing to the marshy nature of the soil, requires constant repair, and is, therefore, one of the most expensive that can be imagined. It is scarcely possible to obtain for it a firm foundation, whatever amount of rubbish or sand may have been previously laid down. The moisture pierces through everywhere. I saw a riding-school, the bottom of which had been vaulted like a cellar, and, upon the solid masonry, sand and rubbish had been laid to the depth of two yards, and yet the horses were constantly wading through mud.

It is not to be denied that the Russian pavements are in general very bad: good-looking enough when just laid down, but calculated rather for show than wear. One kind of pavement, however, is admirable in St. Petersburg; I mean the wooden pavement, over which the carriages roll as smoothly and as noiselessly as ivory balls over a billiard-table. This kind of pavement, however, which has been adopted only in a few of the principal streets, occasions great expense, on account of the constant repairs which it requires, single blocks sinking every now and then into the watery soil, and leaving dangerous holes behind. The pavement, however, is a matter of less importance here than in most of the European capitals, where nature has not provided a spontaneous railroad for the greater part of the year. For more than six months the streets of St. Petersburg are filled with snow and ice, that form a more convenient road for man and horse than any that art has been able to construct. It is curious to observe the various metamorphoses which the snow road undergoes as the seasons advance. In autumn, vast quantities of snow begin to fall, and lie at first in loose and formless masses, through which the Russian steeds dash fearlessly, scattering showers of sparkling flakes around them in their progress. Gradually the snow is beaten down, and then forms a beautiful solid *bahn*. A gentle thaw tends very much to improve its solidity; whereas, after a long and severe frost, the constant trampling of the horses reduces the surface to a fine powder, that often rises in clouds like dust, to the great annoyance of pedestrians. This, of course, happens only in the Nevskoi Prospekt, the Gorokhovaia Oulitza, and a

few others of the most frequented thoroughfares: in most of the streets, the mass remains compact throughout the winter.

On the return of spring, all this undergoes a remarkable change. In German cities, the police usually takes care to remove the snow; but in St. Petersburg, owing to the great accumulation in its broad streets, this would scarcely be possible. All that the police, therefore, does, when the thaw sets in in good earnest, is to cut trenches through the icy mass to allow the water to run off in proportion as the snow melts. It is not difficult to imagine the filthy state in which the streets necessarily remain under these circumstances. The month of May is in general far advanced, when the pavement still presents nothing to the eye but a lake of mud, with a dirty stream of water rolling through the centre, where the gutter is invariably constructed. The horses are often all but swimming, and a man may sometimes be thankful if he can get from the house-door into his carriage without an accident. This season must be a regular harvest-time for the brushmakers. The lacqueys and shoeblacks are heard to groan aloud over the condition of their masters' boots and cloaks, and to swear that they never hired themselves for such dirty work. A sudden return of frost often restores the whole mass to a solid substance. The streets are then covered again with ice, on which many an over-driven horse is doomed to break a limb.

A Russian *isvoshtshik* prefers his sledge to every other kind of vehicle, and continues to use it as long as an apology for snow is to be found in the streets. The consequence is, that sledges will often be seen on the shady side, when on the sunny side nothing but a wheeled carriage is able to get along.

The dust in summer is intolerable, as in most Russian towns, and owing to the same reasons; the immense width of the streets, and the vast, open, unpaved squares or places that everywhere abound, leaving the wind to exercise its power without control. If, in some of our closely-built European cities, the want of open spaces is felt as an evil, the Russian cities, and St. Petersburg in particular, may be said to have gone into the other extreme. The unnecessary space allowed for their streets makes it almost impossible to light them at night, or to obtain shade in them by day. During summer no lamps are necessary, the streets being then nearly as light at midnight as in London at noon, and the long days that prevail one-half of the year are perhaps in part answerable for the imperfect manner in which the streets are lighted during the long winter nights. The small oil-lamps, then lighted, are large enough to be seen themselves, but not to make other objects visible. They are placed at the sides of the street, whence their rays are scarcely able to reach the centre. They diffuse light only to a distance of about four paces, and when seen from a more remote point, look only like little stars. The broad, long streets on a clear night look pretty enough with their double

rows of little stars, but these serve more for ornament than use. In the Nevskoi Prospekt, indeed, there is no lack of illumination, the shops being for the most part brilliantly lighted up; but in some streets even the glimmering oil-lamps are wanting, and in such a neighbourhood the poor wanderer is grateful for the little light that may escape from some social sitting-room, of which the shutters have been charitably left unclosed.

Notwithstanding this gloomy darkness the streets are not wanting in life, though it is often not without positive danger that a pedestrian can venture from one side to the other. Sledges are every moment seen to emerge from obscurity, and to plunge again as rapidly into impenetrable gloom. Huge shadows seem to be pursuing each other over the snow, the incessant cry of the drivers, "*Padye, padye! beregissa!*" serving them as a mutual warning. The skill and care of these drivers are really deserving of great praise; for accidents, after all, are of rare occurrence. The quiet character of the Russians is shown by the great rarity of murders and acts of violence during these long dark winter nights. Not that anecdotes are wanting of the rogueries of *isvoshtshiks*, *butshniks*, and *platniks*; but the darkness is so pitchy, that that alone is enough to conjure up all sorts of stories; and I believe that if a city with five hundred thousand Italians or Spaniards, or even London or Paris, were left for eight long arctic nights enveloped in a St. Petersburgian obscurity, on the ninth day there would be found so many perforated walls, and so many killed and wounded people in the streets, that the town would look as though it had been occupied by a foreign enemy after a battle.

Three ineffectual attempts have been made to light the city with gas. The first was during Alexander's reign, when, just as all the arrangements were complete, the buildings caught fire, and the plan was abandoned for some years. The second attempt was made after the accession of the present emperor. The high and ungainly building intended for the gasometer was injudiciously placed near the Winter Palace, and formed so prominent a deformity, that the emperor was glad in 1838 to buy up the whole of the premises belonging to the company, for the purpose of having them pulled down. The company then went to work again; and in the autumn of 1839, when people were beginning to look forward to a light winter, the whole illumination was opened and closed on the same day by a frightful explosion, by which the gasometer was destroyed, a number of people were killed, and the money of the shareholders was lost. Since then the attempt has not been renewed.

The huge placards and the colossal letters by which the tradesmen of London and Paris seek to attract public attention are unknown in St. Petersburg. The reading public there is extremely limited, and the merchant who wishes to recommend himself to the multitude must have recourse to a less lettered



process. This accounts for the abundance of pictorial illustrations that decorate so many of the shop-fronts, or advertise the passenger that such-and-such an artist may be found within. The optician announces his calling by a profuse display of spectacles and telescopes; the butcher suspends in front of his establishment a couple of painted oxen, or perhaps a portrait of himself, in the act of presenting a ruddy joint to a passing dame. These signs, that speak the only mute language intelligible to a Russian multitude, relieve in some measure the monotony of the streets. The baker is sure to have a board over his door with a representation of every species of roll and loaf offered for sale in his shop; the tallow-chandler is equally careful to suspend the portraits of all his varieties of longs and shorts destined for the enlightenment of mankind. The musician, the pastry-cook, and in short every handicraftsman to whom the humbler classes are likely to apply, have adopted the same plan, and from the second and third floors huge pictures may sometimes be seen suspended, with appalling likenesses of fiddles, flutes, tarts, sugar-plums, sausages, smoked hams, coats, caps, shoes, stockings, &c.

Most of these pictures are very tolerably executed, and that of a Parisian milliner is particularly entitled to commendation for the art expended on the gauze caps and the lace trimmings. Nor must it be supposed that the merchant is content with displaying only one or two of the articles in which he deals: no; the whole shop must figure on the board, and not only the dealer, but his customers also, must be portrayed there. The coffeehouse-keeper does not think he has done enough when he has displayed a steaming kettle and a graceful array of cups; he must have a whole party making themselves comfortable over their coffee and cigars, and crying to the wavering passenger, "Go thou and do likewise." The jeweller must have not only rings and stars and crosses, but he must have generals and excellencies as large as life, with their breasts blazing with orders, and at least five fingers on each hand laden with rings. The Russians attach great importance to these signs, and a stranger may obtain from them some knowledge of the manners of the people.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NEVA.

THE river Neva serves to carry off the surplus waters of the Ladoga Lake. In this large reservoir, which covers a space of about 100 German (2,000 English) square miles, the water has had full leisure to deposit all its impurities, and has not had time to collect any fresh ones during the few leagues that inter-

vene between the lake and the city. The water of the Neva, therefore, at St. Petersburg, is as clear as crystal, and reminds the traveller of the appearance of the Rhine when it first issues from among the icy grottoes of the Alpine glaciers. About a league from its mouth the Neva divides into several arms, forming thus a little archipelago of islands, which are either included within the city of St. Petersburg, or contribute to its embellishment by their gardens and plantations. These arms of the Neva, at least the four principal among them, are known by the names of the Great and Little Neva, and the Great and Little Nefka; and though there are few rivers that may not be said to benefit the cities built upon their banks, yet it may safely be said that there is no city more indebted to its river than the Palmyra of the North. From the interior of the empire the Neva brings to her capital the native abundance of the land: food for man, and for the animals dependent on man, materials for clothing, housing, and warming him. At her mouth she receives the luxuries of foreign regions, and conveys them not only to the noble palaces on her own banks, but, by means of an extensive system of inland navigation, she transports them into the most central provinces of the vast Russian empire. She furnishes the first necessary of life, in the highest perfection, to the citizens of St. Petersburg, who are without any other supply of water, for a pure spring is not to be met with for many leagues around. She makes their soup, and prepares the very best of tea and coffee for them. She yields an abundance of fish for their banquets, and does not disdain to render them even the most menial services: she washes their bodies and their linen, and winding through their city in a multitude of canals, carries away all its impurities. The water of the Neva is as daily a topic with those that dwell on its banks as the water of the Nile is to the Egyptians; and this is the less surprising, as the Neva is a source not only of delight and enjoyment to the people of St. Petersburg, but also one of constant anxiety, and sometimes of terror.

The northern winter imprisons the lovely nymph of the Neva in icy bands for six months in the year. It is seldom till after the beginning of April that the water acquires sufficient warmth to burst her prison. The moment is always anxiously expected; and no sooner have the dirty masses of ice advanced sufficiently to display as much of the bright mirror of the river as may suffice to bear a boat from one side to the other, than the glad tidings are announced to the inhabitants by the artillery of the fortress. At that moment, be it day or night, the commandant of the fortress, arrayed in all the insignia of his rank, and accompanied by the officers of his suite, embarks in an elegant gondola, and repairs to the emperor's palace, which lies immediately opposite. He fills a large crystal goblet with the water of the Neva, and presents it to the emperor as the first and most precious tribute of returning spring. He informs his master that

the force of winter has been broken, that the waters are free again, that an active navigation may now again be looked for, and points to his own gondola as the first swan that has swam on the river that year. He then presents the goblet to the emperor, who drinks it off to the health of the dear citizens of his capital. There is not probably on the face of the globe another glass of water that brings a better price; for it is customary for the emperor to fill the goblet with ducats before he returns it to the commandant. Such at least *was* the custom; but the goblet was found to have a sad tendency to enlarge its dimensions; so that the emperor began to perceive that he had every year a larger dose of water to drink, and a greater number of ducats to pay for it. At last he thought it high time to compromise matters with his commandant, who now receives on each occasion a fixed sum of 200 ducats. Even this, it must be admitted, is a truly imperial fee for a draught of water; but the compromise is said to have effectually arrested the alarming growth of the goblet.

As the close of winter approaches, the ice of the Neva assumes a very remarkable appearance, resolving itself into a number of thin bars of ice, of about an inch in diameter, and equal in length to the thickness of the crust that covers the river. These bars have at last so little adhesion, that it becomes dangerous to venture on the ice, except where it is covered by a solid mass of snow. The foot, pushing down some of these bars, will sink at times through ice several ells thick; and the large masses of ice, apparently quite solid, that lie on the dry ground, break into a multitude of glassy bars when gently touched with a stick. Several weeks, therefore, before the ice breaks up, all driving or walking upon it is prohibited. Here and there some open spaces begin to show themselves, and a quantity of dirty snow-water collects upon the surface. The icy crust that, a few weeks previously, had looked so gay and animated with its sledges and promenaders, becomes now quite oppressive to look upon, and every one longs to see the dirty, useless, worn-out servitor take his departure. There has often been fine warm weather for several weeks before the Neva shows the least sign of recovering her liberty; for which, in the end, she is usually more indebted to rain and wind than to the rays of the sun. One good shower at this season has more effect upon the ice than three days of sunshine; and it is rarely till after there have been several rainy and windy days in succession that the ice is got into motion. The surest symptom of an approaching break-up is the disappearance of the water from the surface. As long as there is water on the ice nobody hesitates to venture on it, even when the horses have to wade breast high; but, as soon as the water disappears, the fact is taken as a warning that the ice has separated from the banks, and has become too porous to retain water on its surface.

It is generally between the 6th and the 14th of April (old

style), or between the 18th and the 26th, according to the calendar in use in most parts of Europe, that the Neva throws off her icy covering. The 6th is the most general day. On that day the interesting fact is said to occur, on an average, ten times in a century, so that ten to one against the 6th is always thought a fair wager. The 30th of April (12th of May, N. S.) is considered the latest day, and the 6th of March (18th, N. S.) is considered the earliest day on which the ice ever breaks up. On each of these days the occurrence is supposed to take place once in a hundred years. It is generally about the middle of November, and more frequently on the 20th (2d of December, N. S.) than on any other day, that the ice is brought to a standstill. In 1826 the river was not frozen up before the 14th of December, and in 1805 as early as the 16th of October.

The breaking up of the ice is an anxious moment to every one. A multitude of wagers are always depending upon it, and every one is more or less interested. The carpenters and work-people long to earn an honest penny or two by the reconstruction of the bridges; the ladies wish the Neva and the Gulf of Finland clear, that the steamer from Lübeck may arrive with the latest *nouveautés* from Paris; the merchants are often in the most painful suspense, lest a protracted winter, by delaying the arrival of their vessels, should mar the finest speculations; booksellers and students are longing for a supply of the new books that have been ushered into life in England, France, and Germany, during the preceding six months. The sick native, and the home-sick stranger, are alike anxious for the day that may re-establish the communication with more genial climes, and almost the only subject of speculation at this season is the day when the river will be free again. On Easter Sunday and Easter Monday a great number of bets are sure to be laid. One man, in 1836, had betted against every day, from the 1st to the 17th of April, and won nearly all his wagers.

The departure of the ice always forms an exciting spectacle, and crowds are sure to be attracted to the quays by the first gun fired from the citadel. The golden gondola of the commandant is not long alone in its glory, for hundreds of boats are quickly in motion, to re-establish the communication between the different quarters of the city.

The first blow is more than half the battle on these occasions, but it is not all the battle. It is only that part of the ice which lies in the immediate vicinity of St. Petersburg that moves away on the first day. The ice from the upper part of the river frequently comes down afterwards in huge masses, and more than once forces the inhabitants of the one side to postpone their visits to their friends on the other side. For several weeks after the first break-up, the ice continues occasionally to come down in great force from the Ladoga Lake. As this lake has a surface of two thousand square miles, if all the ice had to go down the Neva,

which is only a verst in breadth and not very rapid in its current, it would take more than two months of incessant *eisgung*. It follows, therefore, that the greater part of the ice must melt within the lake itself; still quite enough remains for the annoyance of the St. Petersburgers, who are often inconvenienced by the accumulation that takes place at the mouth of the river. The boatmen of St. Petersburg, however, are tolerably familiar with ice, and the navigation on the river is seldom interrupted by these later arrivals from the lake.

All the other harbours of the Baltic are usually free from ice before that of St. Petersburg, and a number of vessels are almost always awaiting, in the Sound, the news that the navigation of the Russian capital has been resumed. The first spring ship that arrives in the Neva is the occasion of great rejoicing, and seldom fails to bring its cargo to an excellent market. It is mostly laden with oranges, millinery, and such articles of taste and vanity as are likely to be most attractive to the frivolous and wealthy, who seldom fail to reward the first comer by purchasing his wares at enormous prices. The first ship is soon followed by multitudes, and the most active life succeeds to a stillness like that of death. All the flags of Europe come floating in from the sea, and fragile rafts and rudely-built barges descend the river with the products of the interior. The contents of the warehouses find their way on ship-board. The ships of war take their departure for their peaceful evolutions in the Baltic. The smoking steamers are seen snorting and splashing up and down the river, where a few weeks before a seal could not have found room to air himself. Every day, every hour, brings something new, till the disenchantment of the icy palace is complete.

An immense quantity of ice is consumed in Russian house-keeping. Throughout the summer, ices are sold in the streets of every Russian town; and not only iced water, iced wine, and iced beer, but even iced tea, is drunk in immense quantities. The short but excessively hot summer would spoil most of the food brought to market, had not the winter provided in abundance the means for guarding against such rapid decomposition. An ice-house is therefore looked on as an indispensable appendage, not merely to the establishments of the wealthy, but even to the huts of the peasants. In St. Petersburg alone there are said to be ten thousand ice-houses, and it may easily be supposed that to fill all these cellars is a task of no trifling magnitude. It is not too much to calculate that each ice-house, on an average, requires fifty sledge loads of ice to fill it. The fishmongers, butchers, and dealers in quass, have such enormous cellars, that many hundreds of loads will go into them, and the breweries, distilleries, &c. consume incalculable quantities. According to the above calculation, five hundred thousand sledge loads of ice would have to be drawn out of the Neva every year, but this

calculation is under rather than over the mark. It is certainly the merchandise in which the most extensive traffic is carried on during winter. Whole processions of sledges laden with the glittering crystals may then be seen ascending from the Neva, and thousands of men are incessantly at work raising the cooling produce from its parent river.

The breaking of the ice is carried on in this way:—The workmen begin by clearing the snow away from the surface, that they may clearly trace out the form of the blocks to be detached. They then measure off a large parallelogram, and mark the outline with a hatchet. This parallelogram is subdivided into a number of squares of a size to suit the capacity of their sledges. When the drawing is complete, the more serious part of the work begins. A regular trench has to be formed round the parallelogram in question. This is done with hatchets, and as the ice is frequently four or five feet thick, the trenches become at last so deep that the workmen are as completely lost to the eye as if they had been labouring in a mine. Of course, a sufficient thickness of ice must be left in the trenches to bear the workmen, which is afterwards broken with bars of iron. When the parallelogram has thus been loosened, the subdivision is effected with comparative ease. A number of men mount the swimming mass, and with their pointed iron ice-breakers they all strike at the same moment upon the line that has been marked out. A few volleys of this kind make the ice break just along the wished-for line, and each of the oblong slips thus obtained is broken up again into square pieces after a similar fashion. To draw the fragments out of the water, a kind of inclined railroad has to be made on the side of the standing ice. This done, iron hooks are fastened into the pieces that are to be landed, and, amid loud cheers, the clear, green, crystalline mass is drawn up by willing hands. As the huge lumps lie on the snow, they appear of an emerald green, and are remarkably compact, without either bubble or rent. As soon as the sledge is loaded, the driver seats himself upon his merchandise, and thus, coolly enthroned, glides away to the cellars of his customers, enlivening his frosty occupation with a merry song. It is by no means without interest to visit the ice-shafts of the Neva, and watch the Russian labourers while engaged in a task so congenial to the habits of their country.

In the cellars the ice is piled up with much art and regularity, and all sorts of shelves and niches are made for the convenience of placing milk, meat, and similar articles there in hot weather. Such a description at least applies to what may be called a tidy, orderly ice-house; but tidiness and order do not always preside over Russian arrangements, and in the majority of cellars the ice is thrown carelessly in and broken into pieces, that it may be packed away into the corners, and that as little space as possible may be left unoccupied. The consistency and durability of the

ice do not appear to suffer from this breaking process; on the contrary, the whole, if well packed, soon freezes into one compact mass, that is afterwards proof against the warmest summer. The Russians are so accustomed to these ice-houses, that they are at a loss to understand how a family can do without them; and their housewives are in the greatest trouble when they think they have not laid in a sufficient supply of ice during the winter, or when in summer they fancy their stock likely to run short. It may safely be estimated that the ice consumed in St. Petersburg during the summer costs the inhabitants from two to three millions of rubles.

Permanent bridges have been built in St. Petersburg only over the canals, the Fontanka, the Moika, the Ligofka, &c. which are called canals, and have been worked into the shape of canals, but which, in reality, are small arms of the Neva. Most of these bridges were built by the Empress Catherine. They are of stone, very solid, are all constructed after the same model, and are, absurdly enough, provided with gates and doors, for the apparent purpose of impeding the progress of pedestrians. There are upwards of thirty of them; but they are much too narrow for the increased traffic of the city, and the tide of equipages rolling through the streets generally finds itself reduced to a more moderate pace on arriving near a bridge. Policemen are, therefore, stationed at every bridge to maintain order and prevent accidents; and whereas in Germany a man is liable to a fine of two or three dollars for driving too fast over a bridge, a coachman in St. Petersburg exposes not only himself, but his horses too, to be assailed by the cane of the policeman, if he neglects to drive over a bridge otherwise than at a quick trot. Some new bridges, and among them several elegant suspension bridges, have been added of late years, and of these there may also be about thirty; still the number is felt to be too small for this city of many islands.

Over the larger arms of the river, the communication by means of bridges is in a most unsatisfactory condition. The two most important portions of the city, for instance, the Vassili Ostrof and the Great Side, are connected only by one bridge, the Isaac's Bridge; the Trotskoi Most is the only bridge between the Great Side and the St. Petersburg Side; the Vassili Ostrof again has one bridge to the St. Petersburg side; and the Vilborg Side is connected by one bridge with the St. Petersburg Side, and by another with the Great Side. These five bridges, with four smaller ones that serve to connect the Apothecary Island, the Stone Island, Yelagin Island, and Krestofski Island, consist merely of boarded carriage-ways resting on pontoons. The masses of ice that come down in spring from the Ladoga Lake have hitherto deterred the government from incurring the expense of building permanent bridges of stone, though scarcely a year elapses in which some plan for the construction of better bridges is not proposed, discussed, forgotten, and renewed.

It sometimes happens that the ice in the Gulf of Cronstadt is broken by stormy weather, while that in the Neva continues solid for some time afterwards. The immense pressure that then ensues causes the whole mass of ice in the river to glide downward in an unbroken body towards the gulf. This pressure is supposed to be so great that no bridge would be able to withstand it. Another difficulty is the marshy character of the soil, in which it would not be easy, except at enormous cost, to obtain a foundation sufficiently strong to bear the buttresses of a bridge. These are serious difficulties, no doubt, but I am satisfied they will some day or other be overcome.

The nine pontoon bridges of St. Petersburg are so constructed that they may easily be taken to pieces, and quickly be put together again. During summer they remain undisturbed, each pontoon moored to its anchor, and fastened to huge piles; but when the ice begins to come down the river in autumn, the bridges are taken asunder. Each bridge has its commandant, with a hundred or two of workmen under his command. When the bridge has thus been removed, the intercourse between the different portions of the city can be carried on only by means of boats. As soon as the ice stands the bridges are reconstructed, for the ice on the Neva always forms a very rough surface, for which reason most people prefer using the bridges when they wish to cross the river. Not but a number of paths, crossing each other in all directions, are soon formed in the vast snowy desert.

In spring, the bridges continue to be used till the artillery of the fortress announces the breaking up of the ice, when they rapidly disappear, under the dexterous management of the commandants and their experienced assistants. Preparations have usually been made some days before, by clearing a space in the river, to allow the pontoons to glide safely down into their several havens of refuge. As soon as the ice has passed, the bridges are restored; but every succeeding arrival of ice makes another demolition necessary. Such is the eagerness of the inhabitants of the different quarters to be able to avail themselves of the accommodation of their bridges, that they take advantage even of the shortest interval of open water. Each time that the Isaac's Bridge is put together, an expense of several hundred rubles is incurred; nevertheless, I have seen it taken to pieces and put together again two or three times on one day; and in the course of one spring it is said to have been broken up and reconstructed no less than twenty-three times.

It may easily be supposed that St. Petersburg has to pay dearly enough for these wretched wooden bridges. The constant demolition and reconstruction soon wear the wood out, and the boards at the top are quickly worn to dust by the carriages incessantly passing across. It is not at all impossible that the Isaac's Bridge, during the short period of its existence, has cost more than the



massive bridge of Dresden during the three hundred years that have elapsed since it was built.\*

When in its bridgeless condition, the city feels itself at all times very uncomfortable. St. Petersburg may then be said to be divided into as many towns as there are islands; relations can learn as little from each other for days together as if an ocean divided them instead of a river; the public officers can receive no orders from the central administration, and must act on their own judgment and responsibility; merchants cannot confer together, bills cannot be presented, teachers cannot give their lessons, guests cannot join the festive board, and the *troshchiks* can circulate only within a limited range. Business and pleasure are alike interrupted, and every one longs to be delivered from what is felt as a species of imprisonment. The consequence is, that in autumn, when the icy covering is yet in the weakness of its infancy, and in spring, when it begins to fall into the decrepitude of age, a number of contrivances are had recourse to in order to strengthen it. The very moment the ice stands, straw roads are laid in every direction over the still disjointed fragments; and in spring, boards are laid over the dangerous places, as long as the police will allow these supplementary bridges to be used. When the authorities consider the time is come to prohibit all passage across the ice, policemen are stationed everywhere along the sides of the river, to enforce the prohibition. The messages to be carried across are, however, sometimes of such importance, and the rewards offered so great, that the Russian *mushiks* often venture across, in defiance of the police, even when the ice is on the move. The adventurous messenger, on such occasions, armed only with a deal board, may be seen dexterously crossing from one piece of ice to another, to the great amusement of the spectators on the quays, and generally he escapes not only the dangers of the passage, but also the more dreaded dangers to be apprehended from the gendarmes waiting for him on the shore. Sometimes, of course, these hazardous attempts are attended by fatal consequences, and every year the Neva is sure to swallow up her allotted number of victims; indeed, it may be doubted whether there is another city in the world where so many people are yearly drowned as at St. Petersburg.

It is melancholy to think of the fate probably reserved for this beautiful youthful city, with all its splendid creations. There

\* The Dresden Bridge, known to the inhabitants under the name of the Elbe Bridge, is one thousand four hundred and twenty feet long, or two hundred feet longer than Waterloo Bridge. The Elbe Bridge is considered the finest and longest structure of the kind in Germany. It rests on sixteen arches, is thirty-six feet in width, and has a foot pavement and an iron balustrade on each side. On the centre pier stands a bronze crucifix, with an inscription in commemoration of the partial destruction of the bridge in 1813, to facilitate the retreat of the French under Marshal Davoust, and of its restoration by the Emperor Alexander.

## THE NEVA.

are cities in the world of which a large portion might be destroyed to their manifest advantage; but in the new and cheerful St. Petersburg, every act of destruction, whether by the hand of nature or of man, seems calculated to awaken sorrow and regret. Yet such are the destructive powers by which its existence is threatened, that no other city probably lives in such constant and imminent peril.

The Gulf of Finland runs from St. Petersburg in a due westerly direction, and it is exactly from that quarter that the heaviest storms always blow. The west wind naturally sweeps the waters up towards the city. If the gulf were broad at its termination, this would perhaps be of little consequence; but unfortunately the gulf narrows gradually to a point, and that point is St. Petersburg. When a gale, therefore, blows from the west, the waters of the gulf are blown into the Neva, and opposite the exit of those that come rolling down from the lake. Now the delta of the Neva, into which the palaces of St. Petersburg have struck their roots, is flat and low, and there is scarcely a spot of ground in the capital that lies more than twelve or fourteen feet above the customary level of the sea. A rise of fifteen feet is, therefore, enough to put the whole city under water, and a rise of thirty or forty feet would be enough to drown nearly the whole population. The poor inhabitants are thus in constant danger, and can seldom be certain that within the next twenty-four hours the whole five hundred thousand of them will not be swept at once into a watery grave.

All that is necessary to bring about such a calamity is that a storm from the west should arise just as the ice is breaking up, and that this should happen when the water in the river is at its highest. The masses of ice blown from the sea into the river would then meet those that would be coming down, and the struggle between these opposing powers would suffice to raze to the ground the whole city and all its proud palaces, and princes and beggars would be drowned promiscuously, like Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. The matter is so serious that I don't feel certain whether I ought to allow myself to speak so sportively about it. The people of St. Petersburg are quite aware of their danger, and many among them, when they reflect on it, feel their hearts heaving within them. Their only hope is that the three events, a westerly storm, high water, and an *eisgang*, are not likely to occur simultaneously. There are sixty-four points of the compass, they say, and when it is high water, and the ice coming down, it is not very probable that an obstinate west wind should choose just at that moment to blow in upon us to our destruction.

It is not the less true, however, that during the spring it does often blow from the west for many days together, when the swimming ice is still formidable enough to excite serious alarm. It is to be regretted that the Fins, the ancient inhabitants of the delta

of the Neva, should not have kept meteorological registers, from which we might calculate how often in a thousand years, or perhaps in ten thousand years, the dreaded junction of these three circumstances has usually occurred. As it is, we must not be surprised if we read one of these days in the newspapers, that St. Petersburg, which rose so suddenly, like a brilliant meteor from the Finnish marshes, has sunk as suddenly, and been extinguished there like an *ignis fatuus*. May God have the city in his keeping! Human aid can be of no avail. Little as Russian enterprise is disposed to be deterred by difficulties, it will scarcely undertake to dam off the ocean, or to give to a mighty river a new course. Canals to carry away the waters of the Neva, and moles to serve as ramparts against the sea, have sometimes been spoken of, but practical men have always rejected the proposed plans as impossible of execution. Nothing, therefore, has as yet been done, and St. Petersburg continues exposed to the mercy of the winds and waves. In many quarters of the town, inundations are of frequent occurrence, and come so suddenly, that the assembled guests at a party are not unfrequently unable to leave the hospitable roof under which they have been entertained. Water is quite as much dreaded in St. Petersburg as fire is in other cities, and measures are, therefore, taken to inform the inhabitants of their danger the moment the river begins to rise above its customary level. When the extreme points of the islands are under water, a cannon is fired from the Admiralty, and the water-flags are hoisted on every steeple, as a signal that the Nereids have declared the city in a state of siege. This alarm-gun is repeated every hour, until the danger seems to be at an end. When the river rises sufficiently high to lay the lowest streets under water, the alarm-gun is fired every quarter of an hour. In proportion as the river rises, the artillery becomes louder and more importunate, till at last minute-guns are fired, and are understood as a cry of despair, calling upon ships and boats to hasten to the aid of a drowning population.

The misery that follows upon a general inundation is indescribable. Every one still talks of the sufferings and calamities brought upon the city by the disastrous 17th of November, 1824. On that day, there occurred the highest inundation of which a record has been preserved, and in every street the height to which the river rose is still marked. The water rose quite quietly, as is usually the case with the inundations of St. Petersburg, where there are no dykes to break through. Impelled by a furious west wind, the water continued to rise higher and higher, came streaming through the streets, lifted all the carts and equipages from the ground, rushed in mighty cataracts through the windows and into the cellars, and rose in huge columns from the common sewers. On Vasiliefskoi Island and on the St. Petersburg side the suffering was greatest, particularly on the latter island, where many of the poor were lodged in tenements of no very solid con-

struction. Some of the wooden houses were lifted from the ground, and continued to swim about with all their inhabitants in them, without going to pieces. Equipages were abandoned in the streets, and the horses, unable to disengage themselves from their harness, were miserably drowned, while their masters had sought safety in some more elevated spot. The trees in the public squares were as crowded with men as they had ever before been with sparrows. Still the water kept rising, and towards evening had attained such a height, that it was feared the storm would tear the men-of-war from their moorings and drive them in among the houses. The calamity was the more destructive as it had come so noiselessly upon the city that none had imagined the danger so great as it really was. The worst effects were those that operated unseen. Many houses fell in only on the following day, when the river had already returned into its accustomed bed; but from those that remained standing, it was long before the damp could be expelled. Sickness became general, and deadly epidemics continued to rage in some quarters for many weeks afterwards.

The night was terrible. The waters had continued to rise till the evening, and should they continue to do so, there seemed to be no chance of escape during the pitchy darkness that might be looked for. Thousands of families, the members of which were separated, spent the night in torturing anxiety.

Even the most serious things have often a ludicrous side on which they may be viewed, and along with the gloomy recollections of that calamitous day, a variety of amusing anecdotes have also been preserved. A gardener told me that he had been busy clipping some trees, and had not noticed the rising of the water, till it was too late for him to attempt to seek refuge anywhere but on the roof of an adjoining garden pavilion, where he was soon joined by such a host of rats and mice, that he became apprehensive of being devoured by them. Fortunately, however, a dog and a cat sought refuge in the same place. With these he immediately entered into an offensive and defensive alliance, and the three confederates were able to make good their position during the night.

Many believe that what with merchandise spoiled, houses destroyed, furniture injured, damage to the pavement, &c. this inundation cost the city more than a hundred millions of rubles, and that directly and indirectly several thousands of the inhabitants lost their lives on the occasion.

The purity of the Neva water has already been mentioned; yet it is a well-known fact, that when drunk by strangers, it produces at first unpleasant effects: for which reason persons, when they first arrive at St. Petersburg, are always advised to drink no water without mixing wine or spirit with it. This lasts, however, for a very short time; and once accustomed to the Neva water, most people grow so fond of it, that they prefer it to every other

water in the world. A St. Petersburger, on returning from a journey, always congratulates himself on being again able to slake his thirst in the water of his beloved river, and many a Russian, no doubt, has been welcomed home again in the same way in which I once saw a young man welcomed on his return to his family: namely, with a goblet of Neva water. The Emperor Alexander, it is said, when he travelled, always had a quantity of Neva water bottled up for his own drinking during his absence from his capital. The tea and coffee in St. Petersburg are excellent, and their good qualities are in part attributed to the water with which they are prepared. In the shape of beer it is drunk in every corner of the empire, and the English residents are unanimous in their testimony to the superiority of Neva water for washing linen.

The Neva water is, however, the only usable water within reach of St. Petersburg. All the wells that have been sunk in and near the city yield nothing but a yellow disagreeable water, unfit for any domestic purposes. In none of the houses is the water laid on by means of pipes, but in each house there is a large water-butt and the men, whose exclusive business it is to fill these reservoirs are busily engaged all day long with their water-carts, drawn generally each by one horse. The poorer classes fetch their water from the river-side in pails. These are fastened to long poles, that the water may be drawn as far as possible from the bank, for in the middle of the stream the water is of course purer than near the side. In the winter, holes are hewn in the ice, whence the water is pumped up, and troughs are constructed of ice in the streets for the use of the horses. In spring, when the snow melts, the river for a time loses its accustomed purity, and the want of clean water becomes a subject of general lamentation. The water-carts, plying in every direction, form one of the constant decorations of the St. Petersburg streets. Perhaps one of the most useful innovations that a Russian emperor could introduce into the interior organization of his capital, would be a good water-company, that would lay down pipes throughout the city, and introduce a constant supply of so necessary an article into the interior of every dwelling.

The *sadoks*, or floating fish-magazines of the Neva, are an object of even more interest to a stranger than the washing-boats. The Russians are admirably skilled in all that relates to the catching, preserving, and selling of fish. The *sadoks* are pretty wooden houses, neatly painted, and not unlike the pavilions on the Alster at Hamburg. The *sadok* is fixed on a kind of raft, is moored close to the bank, with which it generally communicates by means of a small wooden bridge. Within is generally a large room, where the dried and smoked fish are hung up, like the hams and sausages in the cottage of a Westphalian peasant. In the middle, by way of a protection to the establishment, there are sure to be a couple of large-sacred images with lamps burning

before them. Besides smoking and salting their fish, the Russians have another mode of preserving them; namely, by freezing them. In winter large boxes may be seen, something like our German meal-chests. These boxes are filled with frozen fish: with turbot and herrings from Archangel, and with the delicate yershtshis from the Ladoga lake. At each side of the larger room are some smaller ones, for the accommodation of the crew of the *sadok*, and one fitted up as a kind of refreshment-room for those who visit these establishments for the purpose of eating fresh caviare in perfection. Behind the *sadok* are always large reservoirs in which a number of live fish are kept; for the Russians are great gourmands in the article of fish, and make a great point of popping them alive into the pot. This species of luxury is sometimes carried to a great excess. The fish of the Volga are brought alive to St. Petersburg at an enormous cost. A sterlet, which, if dead, might be had for thirty or forty rubles, will bring from one hundred to three hundred if alive, a wealthy Russian taking a pride in showing it alive to his guests, a little while before it figures on his board.

In the centre of the town, the Neva is about a verst in breadth, and owing to the great bend which the river makes, its length within the city is not less than three German (more than thirteen English) miles. It is easy to imagine the icy waste which the surface must present in winter, when, in the centre of this great capital, a man may perform journeys by night that almost make him fancy himself travelling in the wilds of Lapland. The lamps in the houses may indeed be seen twinkling at a distance, but the moon or the aurora borealis afford the only light to guide him on his way; and he will often have occasion to consult the compass and the stars to direct his course. People have at times been robbed and murdered on the ice, so that these night expeditions on the Neva during winter are always in very bad odour, and avoided as much as possible by all prudent people. How changed is the scene in summer, when boating on the Neva becomes a favourite amusement with all classes! The nights then are warm and beautifully clear, and the Russians probably enjoy their gondolas the more on account of the shortness of the period during which they can enjoy them. During June and July, the arms of the Neva are swarming, night and day, with gondolas and sailing-boats; and all the boasted scenes of Venice and her canals are insignificant to the animated pictures then constantly presenting themselves on this northern river. Imagine an atmosphere gently agitated by the mildest and most insinuating zephyrs; the air warm but not sultry, and the night so clear that all creation seems awake, and even the birds continue to pour forth their song: a night, in short, with all the charms and loveliness of night, combined with all the convenience of day, as though the jocund Day had flung over his shoulders the majestic mantle of Night. Imagine, then, a noble river, mean-

dering in a multitude of arms, through an archipelago of islands, crowned with magnificent palaces, or decorated with delicious gardens. The wide sea itself, close to the city, presents itself at each of the six mouths of the river. Imagine the scene animated by thousands of ships and boats. Here, the sailing-boat of the English skipper, who proudly displays his superior skill over all else that floats on the watery element; there the German burgher with his family, abandoning himself to enjoyment after the labours of a busy day. On another side may be seen a congregation of Russian peasants pouring the sweet melodies of their nation over the bosom of the water, or the splendid barge of a Russian noble, attended by a magnificent band of wind instruments, each artist the born thrall of the master he attends on. The seamen of every maritime nation may be seen rowing about, enjoying a scene to the animation of which they contribute their share. I doubt whether there be a city on the globe that can show anything equal to the beauty of one of these boat excursions on the Neva, during a fine summer night.

## CHAPTER IV:

### LIFE IN THE STREETS.

A STRANGER accustomed to the crowds and bustle of London or Paris, is struck on his arrival at St. Petersburg by the emptiness of the streets. He finds vast open spaces in which at times he beholds nothing but a solitary droshky, that wends its way along like a boat drifting on the open sea. He sees spacious streets bordered by rows of mute palaces, with only here and there a human figure hovering about, like a lurking freebooter among a waste of rocks. The vastness of the plain on which the city has been laid out shows that its founders speculated on a distant future. Rapidly as the population has been increasing, it is still insufficient to fill the frame allotted to it, or to give to the streets that life and movement which we look for in the capital of a great empire. On the occasion, indeed, of great public festivals and rejoicings, and at all times in the Nevskoi Prospekt and about the Admiralty, the movement is very considerable, but this only tends to leave the throng and bustle of the other quarters of the town far below the average.

The population of St. Petersburg is the most varied and motley that mind can imagine. To begin with the military:—We have the Caucasian guards, the Tartar guards, the Finland guards, besides a fourth and fifth division of the guards from the various tribes of Cossacks. Of these nations, the *élite* are thus always retained as hostages in the capital, and their several uniforms

are alone sufficient to present an ever-changing picture to the eye of an observer. Here may be seen a Cossack trotting over one of the *Platz Parads* with his lance in rest, as though in his imagination he were still pursuing a cloud of flying Frenchmen. Further on, perchance a Circassian cavalier, in his shirt of mail, and harnessed from head to foot, is going through his warlike exercises. The Moslem from the Taurus may be seen gravely moving through the throng, while the well-drilled Russian soldiers defile in long columns through the streets. Of all the endless variety of uniform that belong to the great Russian army, a few specimens are always to be seen in the capital. There are the Paylov guards, the Semeonov guards, and the Pavlogradski guards; the Sum hussars, and the Tshuguyev hussars; then there are chasseurs à cheval, and sharpshooters on foot; then there are cuirassiers, and grenadiers, and pioneers, and engineers, horse artillery, and foot artillery; to say nothing of dragoons, lancers, and those military plebeians, the troops of the line. All these, in their various uniforms, marching to parade, returning to their barracks, mounting guard, and passing through the other multifarious duties of garrison life, are in themselves enough to give life and diversity to the streets.

If then we turn to the more pacific part of the population, devoted to the less brilliant, but certainly not less useful, pursuit of commerce, we find every nation of Europe, and almost every nation of Asia, represented in the streets of St. Petersburg. Spaniards and Italians, English and French, Greeks and Scandinavians, may be seen mingling together; nor will the silken garments of the Persian and the Bokharian be wanting to the picture; nor the dangling tail of the Chinese, nor the pearly teeth of the Arabian.

The *infima plebs* bears an outside as motley as the more aristocratic portion of the community. The German *hauber* may be seen lounging among the noisy, bearded Russians; the slim Pole elbow; the diminutive Finlander; and Esthonians, Letts, and Jews, are running up against each other, while the Mussulman studiously avoids all contact with the Jew. Yankee sailors and dwarfish Kanitshatdales, Caucasians, Moors, and Mongolians, all sects, races, and colours, contribute to make up the populace of the Russian capital.

Nowhere does the street life of St. Petersburg display itself to better effect than in the Nevskoi Prospekt. This magnificent street extends from the Alexander Nevskoi Monastery to the Admiralty: a distance of four versts. Towards the end it makes a slight bend, but throughout the greater part of its length it is perfectly straight. It intersects all the rings of the city: the suburbs of the poor, the showy regions of commerce, and the sumptuous quarters of the aristocracy. A walk along the whole length of this street is one perhaps as interesting as any that can be made in St. Petersburg. Starting from the extreme end,



where a monastery and a cemetery remind us of death and solitude, we first arrive at low little wooden houses which lead us to a cattle-market, where around the spirit-shops may be seen swarms of noisy singing Russian peasants, presenting a picture not unlike what may daily be seen in the villages of the interior. A little farther on, the houses improve in appearance; some are even of stone, and boast of an additional floor; the houses of public entertainment are of a better description, and shops and warehouses are seen, similar to those of the small provincial towns. Next follow some markets and magazines for the sale of inviolated furniture and superannuated apparel, which, having spent their youth in the service of the central quarters, are consigned in old age to the mercy of the suburbs. The houses, in the old Russian fashion, are painted yellow and red, and every man we meet displays a beard of venerable length, and a yet longer caftan. A little farther on, and we see a few *isvoslitshiks* who have strayed by chance so far from their more central haunts; a shaven chin and a swallow-tailed coat may be seen at intervals, and here and there a house assumes something like an air of stateliness and splendour. On arriving at the bend already mentioned, the huge gilt spire of the Admiralty is descried at a distance, floating apparently over the intervening mist. We cross a bridge, and begin to feel that we are in a mighty city. The mansions rise to three, and even to four stories, the inscriptions on the houses become larger and more numerous, carriages-and-four become more frequent, and every now and then the waving plume of a staff-officer dashes by. At length we arrive at the Fontanka Canal, cross the Anitschkof Bridge, and the Palace of Count B. announces at once that we have entered the aristocratic quarter of the capital. From this bridge to the Admiralty is what may be called the fashionable part of the Prospekt, and as we advance the bustle and the throng become greater and greater: carriages-and-four at every step; generals and princes elbowing through the crowd; sumptuous shops, imperial palaces, cathedrals and churches of all the various religions and sects of St. Petersburg.

The scene in this portion of the street, at about mid-day, may challenge comparison with any street in the world, and the splendour of the spectacle is enhanced by the magnificence of the decorations. This part of the street, though fully an English mile in length, does not contain more than fifty houses, each of which, it may easily be inferred, must be of colossal magnitude. Most of these buildings are the property of the several churches that border the street: the Dutch, the Catholic, the Armenian, and others, that received from Peter the Great large grants of land, of little value probably when first bestowed, but from which, as they are now in the heart of the city, splendid revenues are at present derived.

The garrison of St. Petersburg seldom amounts to less than sixty

thousand men, and constitutes, therefore, more than one-ninth of the population. Neither officer nor private must ever appear in public otherwise than in full uniform, and this may suffice to give some idea of the preponderance of the military over the civil costumes that one encounters in the streets. The wild Circassian, with his silver harness and his coat of mail, gaily converses and jests with the more polished Russian officer, while their several kinsmen are busily engaged in cutting each other's throats in the Caucasus. Even in the streets of St. Petersburg, however, it is more safe to avoid collision with these mountaineers, who are sudden and quick in their quarrel, wear sharp daggers, and always carry loaded fire-arms about them. Even at a ball or a *soirée* they never lay their pistols aside, and these are never otherwise than ready for immediate use.

It would not be saying too much, to say that half St. Petersburg are clad in a uniform of one sort or another; for, in addition to the sixty thousand soldiers, there are civil uniforms for the public officers of every grade, for the police, for the professors of the university, and not only for the teachers, but likewise for the pupils of the public schools. Nor must the private uniforms be forgotten, that are worn by the numerous servants of the noble and wealthy families. Still there remain enough of plain coats to keep up the respectability of the fraternity. The whole body of merchants, the English factory, the German barons from the Baltic provinces, Russian princes and landowners from the interior, foreigners, private teachers, and many others, are well pleased to be exempt from the constraint of buttons and epaulettes; indeed, so much that is really respectable walks about in simple black and blue, that a plain coat is felt by many to be rather a desirable distinction, although the wearer is obliged on all public occasions to yield the *pas* to the many-coloured coats of the civil and military *employés*.

The seasons and the variations of the weather bring about many, and often very sudden, changes in the street population of St. Petersburg, where the temperature is always capricious and unstable. In winter every one is cased in furs; in summer light robes of gauze and silk are seen fluttering in the breeze. In the morning the costumes are perhaps all light and airy, and in the evening of the same day none will venture to stir abroad otherwise than in cloaks and mantles. The sun shines, and swarms of dandies and *petites maîtresses* come fluttering abroad; it rains, and the streets are abandoned to the undisputed possession of the "Black People." One day all snow and sledges, the next all mud and clattering wheels.

Nor is it merely the change of weather that alters the physiognomy of the streets. The various sects that make up the population of the town give often a peculiar character to the day. On Friday, the holiday of the Moslems, the turbaned Turk, the black-bearded Persian, and the Tartar with his shorn head, take

their leisure in the streets. On Saturday, the black silk caftans of the Jews come abroad in great numbers; and on the Sunday the Christians of all denominations come forth to their pious exercises or their various diversions. The different sects of the Christians again tend to vary the scene. To-day the Lutherans celebrate their yearly day of penance; and German burghers, with their wives and children, and with their neat black gilt-edged hymn-books under their arms, sally forth on their pilgrimage to the church; to-morrow the Catholics are summoned to some feast or other of the Immaculate Virgin, and Poles and Lithuanians, Frenchmen and Austrians, hurry to their stately temples. The next day are heard the thousand bells of the Greek Kolo-kolniks, and the wives and daughters of the Russian merchants come humming and fluttering about the streets in their gaudy plumage of green, blue, yellow, and red. But the great days are the public holidays, the emperor's days as they are called, when all the modes and fashions current, from Paris to Peking, are certain to be paraded to the public gaze.

It has often been remarked that there are few cities where one sees so many handsome men as in St. Petersburg. This is partly owing to the prevalence of uniforms, which certainly set off the person to advantage, partly also to the fact that all the handsomest men in the provinces are constantly in demand as recruits for the various regiments of the guards. Something must also be attributed to the constant efforts of the Russians to give themselves the most agreeable forms. In no other towns are there so few cripples and deformed people; and this is not owing merely to their being less tolerated here than elsewhere, but also, it is said, to the fact, that the Slavonian race is less apt than any other to produce deformed children. On the other hand, at every step you meet men whose exterior you cannot but admire, and a moment's reflection must fill you with regret that there should be so few fair eyes to contemplate so many handsome specimens of manhood. St. Petersburg is unfortunately a city of men, the male sex being in a majority of at least one hundred thousand, and the women by no means equally distinguished for their charms. The climate seems to be unfavourable to the development of female beauty; the tender plants quickly fade in so rude an atmosphere, and as they are so few in number, they are all the more in demand for the ball-room and the *soirée*, and are the more quickly used-up by the friction of dissipation. Whether this be the cause, or whether the Russian women are naturally less handsome, comparatively, than the men, certain it is, that a fresh, handsome-looking girl is but rarely to be seen at St. Petersburg. The German ladies from the Baltic provinces form the exception; and it is from Finland, Livonia, Esthonia, and Courland, that the gay circles of the capital receive their chief supply of beauty. To this it may be owing that the Russians have so high an opinion of German beauty that they

rarely withhold from a *Nyemka* (German woman) the epithet of *krassivaya*, or beautiful. The ladies at St. Petersburg, though in such great demand on account of their scarcity, are liable, from the same cause, to many inconveniences. For instance, it is impossible for them to walk in the streets, even in broad daylight, without a male escort.

The best hour for walking on the Prospekt is from twelve till two, when the ladies go shopping, and the men go to look at the fair purchasers. Towards two or three o'clock, the purchases have been made, the parade is over, the merchants are leaving the exchange, the world of promenaders wend their way to the English Quay, and the real promenade for the day begins, the imperial family usually mingling with the rest of the loungers. This magnificent quay, constructed, like all the quays of St. Petersburg, of huge blocks of granite, runs along the Neva from the New to the Old Admiralty, and was built during the reign of the Empress Catherine, who caused the canals and rivers of her capital, to the length of not less than twenty-four English miles, to be enclosed in granite. As in all water constructions, the colossal part of the work is not that which meets the eye. The mighty scaffolding on which the quay rests stands deeply imbedded in the marshy soil below. Handsome steps, every here and there, lead down to the river; and for carriages large broad descents have been constructed, and these in winter are usually decorated with all sorts of fanciful columns and other ornaments cut out of the ice. The houses along the English Quay are deservedly called palaces. They were originally, for the most part, built by Englishmen, but are now, nearly all of them, the property of wealthy Russians.

The favourite walk in Hamburg is called the *Jungferstieg*, or Maiden's Walk; the English Quay in St. Petersburg ought to be called the Princes' Walk, for there daily the *élite* of the Russian empire may be seen wearing away the granite with their princely and noble feet. The carriages usually stop at the New Admiralty, where their noble owners descend, and honour the quay by walking up and down it some two or three times. There are no shops; and as the English Quay is not a convenient thoroughfare, the promenaders are seldom disturbed by the presence of any chance passengers. The emperor and the imperial family are a centre to the groups that come to salute them and to be saluted by them. This forms a kind of connexion for the promenaders, and gives a oneness to the assembled company. The Emperor walks up and down, upon an apparent footing of equality with his subjects around him; though these, in point of fact, stand about in the same relation to him that a child's doll does to the Colossus of Rhodes. The Englishman buttons up his hatred of despotism in his great coat; and scarcely condescends to touch his hat when he meets the "Giant of the North;" while, to the Russian by his side, a submissive demeanour has by habit become

a positive source of enjoyment, till he feels a real affection for those to whom the law gives the right of ordering him about. The *élégant* of the French embassy, whose connexions with Paris ensures to him at all times the earliest information relative to the variations of the mode, is observed with as much interest by the native *petit maître*, as an insect would be observed by a naturalist; and be assured that the observations of to-day will be studiously turned to account by the observant student, when to-morrow he proceeds to the important avocations of his toilet. The baron or the reichsgraf from Germany, who can tell you his ancestors from before the times of the Hohenstaufens, and who delights to think that his great-grandchildren after him will be registered in the Gotha Almanac, walks here side by side with the Russian trader, who, like an *iguis fatuus*, has suddenly sprung from some fen or other, and whose name in a few years will disappear and leave no trace behind it, either in the annals of history or the columns of an almanac. The master of some vast estate, in the Ural Mountains or on the arid Steppes, where thousands of souls must labour away for his exclusive profit, walks along the quay with as little pretention as the poor shopman, who can scarcely be said to have a property in his own soul, embodied as it is in the gay garments, which he has such evident delight in displaying to an admiring world.

Another promenade much frequented is the Summer Garden. The other gardens, as that of the Tauride Palace, and that of the Grand Duke Michael's Palace, are but little visited. The Summer Garden, which lies on the Neva, close to the Troitzkoi Bridge, is about one thousand ells long and five hundred broad. It is the oldest garden in the city, contains a number of fine old trees, and is therefore of incalculable value in the centre of the stony masses of the city. It is laid out in a number of long avenues, interspersed with flower-beds, somewhat in the ancient style of gardening, with an abundance of marble statues of Springs and Summers, Floras and Fauns, and other divinities belonging to the same coterie. On the northern side is the celebrated iron railing, with its fanciful garlands and arabesques, which the people will tell you an Englishman once travelled all the way from London to see and make a sketch of, and then returned, satisfied with his journey, not deigning to cast an eye on any of the other marvels of the northern city. This garden is attended to as carefully almost as those of Zarskoye Selo, where a policeman is said to run after every leaf that falls, that it may instantly be removed out of sight. In autumn all the statues are cased in wooden boxes, to protect them against the rain and snow of winter, and all the tender trees and shrubs are at the same time packed up in straw and matting, in which they remain till the return of spring, when statues, trees, and men lay their winter garments aside nearly at one and the same time. The grassplots are regularly watered in summer, and the paths are

carefully cleaned and trimmed. And the garden gratefully repays the pains expended on it; for throughout the fine season it forms a delightful retreat, and its turf and its trees in spring are green and smiling, before any of the other gardens have been able to divest themselves of the chill, hardened grin into which their features have been stiffened during a six months' winter.

In one corner of the Summer Garden stands the palace in which dwelt Peter the Great. It is a little, low, white house, with a few tasteless bas-reliefs painted yellow. On the roof between the chimneys, St. George, mounted on a tin horse, is in the act of piercing the Dragon. In the interior, a few articles of furniture formerly used by Peter are still preserved. The house seems to have grown ashamed of its littleness, for it hides itself completely among the tall linden-trees of the garden, as though fearful of intruding into the company of the stately palaces that have grown up around. Still it twinkles every now and then with its old-fashioned windows through the foliage, as if it took a pleasure in the proud children to which it has given birth. How differently it must have looked when it was yet sole lord of the wilderness when it stood there, the only elegant among a mod of fishers' huts! The five hundred thousand square ells of ground which the garden occupies here in the centre of the town, would be worth at least twenty millions of rubles, if sold for building on. The city may, therefore, be said to sacrifice a yearly revenue of a million of rubles, by allowing the garden to remain; yet the city acts wisely in submitting to the loss, from which it derives more than the value of a million of rubles in cheerfulness and health.

It is particularly in the Summer Garden that the rising generation of St. Petersburg may be said to take their diversion. Hither it is that the little ladies repair with their governesses, the tutors with their little embryo generals and senators, the nurses with their tender charges. It is impossible to imagine a prettier spectacle than all the handsome little Cossacks, Circassians, and Mushniks, that romp about the Summer Garden on a fine day. The Russians of all ranks are fond of dressing their children, till they are seven or eight years, *à la moujik*, as it is called. The hair is cut short, as it is usually worn by the peasantry, and the little fellows are then arrayed in pretty caftans neatly fastened with girdles, nearly of the same fashion as those worn by the Gostinnoi Dvor merchants, with high Tartar caps like those worn by the Russian coachmen. Lately the Circassian costume has been in favour for children, and becomes them admirably, with its silver embroidery and edgings of fur. Only when children come to be nine or ten years old do they begin to dress like Europeans. This, however, applies only to the boys; for little girls, as soon as they can walk, are decked out in the fashions of Paris. The same remarks apply to the children of the imperial family as to those of the nobility generally.

As it is from among these young frequenters of the Summer Garden that the future admirals, generals, and statesmen of the empire are probably to be chosen, it is impossible not to observe them with some degree of interest. Next to their costume, their language is the most remarkable thing about them. As they have Russian servants and nurses, English and French nursery-maids, and German teachers, they usually learn all the four languages at the same time, and as it is not easy for them at first to keep the several dialects distinct, they mix them up into an idiomatic ragout, highly amusing to a stranger, but which to the children themselves must often cause a great confusion of ideas. It is nothing uncommon, for instance, to hear a child express itself in this fashion: "Papa, I have been in the Letnoi Sad; Feodor s'namu buil; est ce que vous n'irez pas." (Papa, I have been in the Summer Garden; Feodor was with us; will you not go.)

The adult Russians generally speak a yet greater number of languages, though, of course, more correctly; but it is remarkable that, linguists as they are, they seldom borrow a term of endearment from any language but that of their land. The Russian is indeed singularly rich in pretty, coaxing, insinuating diminutives; such as *lubesnoi*, my dear; *milinkoi*, my little dear; *däduushka*, my little grandpapa; *matyushka*, my little mamma; *drushka*, my little friend; *golubtshik*, my little dove; *dushinka*, my little soul. Nor are these expressions confined to the Russians. Few strangers are long in the country without acquiring the habit of engrafting upon their own languages the Russian terms of endearment.

The most brilliant day in the year for the Summer Garden is Whit-Monday, when the celebrated festival of the choosing of brides takes place. According to the ancient customs of Russia, the sons and daughters of the traders assemble on that day: those to see, and these to be seen. The young damsels, arrayed in all their finery, are marshalled in due order along the flower-beds, and their mammas are carefully stationed behind them. Every glittering ornament has been collected for the occasion, and not only their own wardrobes, but those of their grandmothers too, have been laid under contribution to collect decorations for the hair, the ears, the arms, the neck, the hands, the feet, the girdle, or, in short, for any part of the person to which, by hook or by crook, anything in the shape of adornment can be fastened. Many of them are so laden with gold and jewellery, that scarcely any part of their natural beauty remains uncovered. It is even said that, on one of these occasions, a Russian mother, not knowing what she should add to her daughter's toilet, contrived to make her a necklace of six dozen of gilt teaspoons, a girdle of an equal number of tablespoons, and then fastened a couple of punch-ladles behind in the form of a cross.

The young men, meanwhile, with their flowing caftans and curled beards, are paraded by their papas up and down, before

these rows of young, mute, blushing beauties, who, in spite of their bashful looks, are evidently ambitious to please, and seem little disposed to resent the admiration of the swains. The papas and mammas endeavour here and there to engage their interesting charges in conversation with each other; and in the course of these little colloquies, certain looks and emotions will betray an unsuspected inclination, or perhaps give birth to sentiments pregnant with future moment.

Eight days after this first bride-show, the interviews take place at the houses of the parents, when, by means of family negotiations, a marriage is all but concluded, and the young couple part all but betrothed to each other. Similar customs prevail among all the nations of the Slavonian races; but it is a singular fact that a usage of the kind should have maintained its ground so long in a place like St. Petersburg, where a numerous part of the public has ever been disposed to make the bride-show an object of ridicule. Of late years, indeed, the fashion has been gradually dying away, and the description given above applies rather to former than to the present times. Nevertheless, the lads and lasses of what may be called the bourgeoisie of St. Petersburg, still muster in the Summer Garden in great force on Whit-Monday, when the foundation is laid for many a matrimonial negotiation; though the business is conducted with less form and stiffness than was wont to be the case some ten years ago.

On one side of the Summer Garden is the Tzarizinskoi Lug, or Field of the Czars, which has somewhat inappropriately been translated into Champ de Mars. This place is more used than any other for exercising troops, though there are several other parade places in the city, and many of them much larger than the Champ de Mars. The Alexandrofskoi Platzparad, the largest of all, occupies fully a square verst, but lies on the outskirts of the capital. The chief parade, however, is held in the square of the Admiralty, and forms one of the daily enjoyments of many of the inhabitants.

The Admiralty is surrounded by a boulevard and a double row of trees. Under these trees the spectators usually walk about during the time of the parade. The emperor generally commands in person; and as there are always present several thousand men, and a host of generals and staff officers, this simple parade forms at all times a handsome spectacle, and may, in fact, pass for a miniature review. To see the emperor ride by with his brilliant staff is itself worth seeing. He is a handsome, majestic-looking man. By his side rides his eldest son, and behind him follow a cloud of cavaliers, of whom each is at the least a prince's son and a major-general. As this splendid *cortège* advances, the soldiers, drawn up in line, present their arms, and the spectators uncover their heads. "Good morning, children!" is the emperor's salutation; "We thank your majesty!" is the response that comes thundering from thousands of throats. The parade often lasts



several hours; and whoever has witnessed a portion of it, taken a stroll down the Nevskoi Prospekt, looked into the Summer Garden, and walked up and down the English Quay, may quiet his conscience with the reflection that he has neglected no part of the St. Petersburg promenades for that day.

A stranger has no occasion, however, to go to the parade, if his object be merely to see the emperor, who may be met with on foot, on horseback, or in a droschky, in all parts of St. Petersburg, and at every hour of the day. There is no other monarch who appears to have so much business to do in the streets as the successor of Peter the Great. There are public institutions to be inspected, the offices of the different departments of government to be visited, reviews to be held, national festivals at which he is expected to attend, new buildings to be superintended, not to speak of the many private visits paid to those whom he is disposed to honour with so high a mark of favour.

Wherever the emperor appears in public, he does so in the most simple and unpretending manner that can be imagined. His usual vehicle, when driving through the streets of his capital, is a sledge or a droschky, drawn by a single horse; and when travelling, his telegue is a rude carriage, little better than those used by the serfs. This is the more remarkable, as in other respects the Russian court is one of greater pomp and magnificence than any other in Europe. Yet I doubt whether the pettiest of all the petty princes of Germany would not think himself affronted, if he were invited to take his place in such a small, plain droschky as the emperor of all the Russias daily makes use of. This is not, however, a custom peculiar to the present emperor: it was adopted by Peter the Great, and has been followed by all his successors.

The superintendence of the street-population of St. Petersburg is entrusted to a class of men called *butshniks*: a name for which they are indebted to the *butki*, or boxes, in which they are stationed night and day. These little wooden boxes are to be seen at every corner, and to each box three *butshniks* are assigned, who have their beds there, their kitchen, and a complete domestic establishment. One of them, wrapped up in a gray cloak faced with red, and armed with a halbert, stands sentinel outside, while another attends to the culinary department, and a third holds himself ready to carry orders, or to convey to the *Siash*, or police-office, the unfortunates whom his comrade may have thought it is duty to arrest. Each *butshnik* has a small whistle, by means of which he conveys a signal to the next post, if a fugitive is to be given chase to. The *quartalniki* are a superior kind of police-officers, and these and the police-masters are constantly going their rounds, to see that the *butshniks* are not neglectful of their duty. By these means, excellent order is always maintained, and in no other capital of Europe are riotous or offensive scenes of less frequent occurrence. At night, in ad-

dition to the day-police, small detachments of mounted gendarmes parade the streets.

The only inhabitants of the capital not liable to the inspection of the police are the crows and pigeons. These birds abound there to an astonishing extent. They fly about free and undisturbed everywhere. The crows congregate in the greatest numbers at the Anitschkoff Palace in the Nevskoi Prospekt, where many thousands often assemble in the evening to edify the passing public with their loud and earnest conversations. It has been noticed that they always perch upon a green roof in preference to a black or red one: perhaps the green may seem to bear more affinity to the foliage of the trees they love to build among. The pigeons are sacred in the eyes of every Russian; and as no one would dare to harm them, they become so bold that they walk carelessly about among a crowd in search of their food, and scarcely make way either for a carriage or a foot-passenger. Nevertheless, they are in a half-wild and neglected condition, and build their nests chiefly about the roofs of the churches. They have their nests also under the roofs of the markets, and particularly among the columns of Gostinnoi Dvor, where the merchants in their hours of leisure take a great delight in feeding and caressing them. In the inner courts of the houses of St. Petersburg there are always large holes or boxes that serve as receptacles for every kind of dirt and rubbish which it is thought desirable to remove to the outside of the house. About these filthy boxes there may at times be seen whole swarms of pigeons feeding on all kinds of garbage, and the only wonder is that the Russians should retain any affection for birds that degenerate so wofully in Russia as to fight, like so many wolves, for putrid meat and fish entrails. Nevertheless, it is thought a species of sacrilege to kill a pigeon. Boys may sometimes, indeed, be seen running about with sticks, to the end of which cords are fastened, and to the end of the cord a button or a stone. This cord they throw dexterously round the necks of the pigeons, as the South Americans throw their lasso round the neck of a horse. The pigeons thus caught are sold to the profane Germans, who are said to convert the holy birds into heathenish ragouts, or bake them in sacrilegious pies.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ISVOHTSHIKS.

THE vast space occupied by a Russian city, with its broad endless streets, and its wide waste public squares and places, makes it probable that the institution of hackney-carriages is one of very

remote origin in Russia. In other countries, the convenience is one known only to large towns; but in Russia, such is the aversion of the people to walking, that, as soon as a few thousand human beings have been collected into the same vicinage, a due supply of *isvoshtshiks* becomes one of the most urgent wants of the new community. From this, some notion may be formed of the army of *isvoshtshiks*, collected together on the pavement of the capital. They are estimated, in some statistical returns I have seen, at eight thousand. In some quarters you may see hundreds at one glance; and when we consider that the length of all the streets of St. Petersburg amounts to nearly four hundred *versts*, it cannot be an extravagant estimate to reckon twenty-five hackney carriages to every *verst*.

We have already seen that there are in one place in St. Petersburg three houses, side by side, to pass which on foot will occupy a man a good half hour. A morning visit, a dinner, and an evening visit, might cost him his whole day. In winter the streets are full of a deep snowdust, formed of the numberless crystals of ice that are constantly undergoing the process of being ground up into fine powder, and through which it is about as tedious to wade as through the sands of Sahara. The rude northern blast, moreover, that ranges uncontrolled through the wide airy streets, makes every man glad enough to creep into a sledge, where he may draw his mantle over his face, and wrap himself, head and all, in furs. In spring, one-half of St. Petersburg is a mere bog, and in summer the intolerable dust actually stops one's breath, and relaxes all the muscles of the feet. No wonder, therefore, that the most resolute pedestrian soon grows tired of using his own feet in St. Petersburg, and in utter despair roars out his "*Davai! Isvoshtshik!*" to the first *droschky* stand.

He will seldom have occasion to "*sing out*" his *davai* a second time. Nay, a man need not even look at the serviceable equipages, for if he only stand still for a moment, and seem to deliberate in his own mind upon the expediency of summoning a charioteer to his assistance, the hint is quite sufficient, and half-a-dozen sledges will immediately come darting up to the spot where he stands. The oat-bags are quickly thrown aside, the harness drawn tight, and each of the rival candidates for favour places himself upon his box, satisfied apparently that he, and he alone, will bear away the prize. "Where to, sir?"—"To the Admiralty."—"I'll go for two rubles."—"I for one and a-half," cries another, and so they go on underbidding each other, till they come down perhaps to half a ruble. You take the cheapest, probably, but take care the cheapest be not also the worst; or you must be prepared for a volley of jokes and banterings from the disappointed applicants. "Ah, do but look, little father, how stingy you are!"—"To save a few *copecks* you put up with that ragged rascal for your coachman."—"He and his

three-legged animal will stick fast before you get half way."—"The gray-bearded vagabond will be sure to upset you; he's so drunk he can't stand."—"He'll take you to the shambles, and swear it's the Admiralty." No one enjoys all this abuse, meanwhile, more than the object of it, who laughs in the sleeve, and grumbles out his "Nitshevoss! never fear, sir; we shall get on well enough."

These men are, for the most part, Russians from all the different governments of the empire; but among them there are also Finlanders, Esthonians, Letts, Poles, and Germans. They arrive at St. Petersburg generally as little boys of ten or twelve years old, hire themselves as drivers to some owner of hackney-carriages, whom they continue to serve till they have saved enough to buy a horse and vehicle, when they set up in business on their own account. Their trade, as all trades are in Russia, is uncontrolled by corporation laws; and should fodder grow dear, or business slack, the isvoshtshik packs up the few worldly goods he possesses, drives away to the south, and re-appears in the streets of Novgorod or Moscow; thus, in pursuit of fortune, they emerge now in one town and now in another, till chance enable them to form a profitable and permanent establishment in some one place. In the provincial towns, where fodder is to be had for little or nothing, they usually drive with *two* horses, but in St. Petersburg, where everything, in comparison, is enormously dear, the public must content themselves with *one*.

In winter the isvoshtshik uses the favourite national vehicle of a sledge, with which he continues to grind the pavement as long as the least trace of snow is to be felt under the spring mud. A covered carriage he never uses. The cloaks and furs of the passengers must do the same service in Russia that the roof of the coach does with us; and when well wrapped up in a series of protecting folds, the warm nucleus of life that occupies the centre, patiently suffers the pelting of snow, rain, and mud till the end of his journey, where the dirty rind is peeled off, and the said kernel steps forth clean and unspotted from his muddy covering.

The isvoshtshiks of St. Petersburg appear to be a race of Hamaxobites,\* leading a sort of nomadic life among the palaces of the capital. They encamp by day in the streets, and so do many of them during the night, their sledge serving them at once as house and bed. Like the Bedouin Arabs, they carry the oat-bag constantly with them, and fasten it, during their intervals of leisure, to the noses of their steeds. In every street arrangements have been made for the convenience of the isvoshtshiks. Every here and there manglers are erected for their use; to water their horses, there are in all parts of the towns convenient descents to the canals or to the river; and hay is sold at

\* Dwellers in waggons.

a number of shops in small bundles, just sufficient for one or two horses. To still the thirst and hunger of the charioteers themselves, there are peripatetic dealers in quass, tea, and bread, who are constantly wandering about the streets for the charitable purpose of feeding the hungry. The animals are as hardy as their masters. Neither care for cold nor rain, both eat as opportunity serves, and are content to take their sleep when it comes. Yet they are always cheerful, the horses ever ready to start off at a smart trot, the drivers at all times disposed for a song, a joke, or a gossip. When they are neither eating, nor engaged in any other serious occupation, they lounge about their sledges, singing some simple melody that they have probably brought with them from their native forests. Where several of them happen to be together at the corner of a street, they are sure to be engaged in some game or other, pelting with snow-balls, wrestling, or bantering each other, till the "Davai, isvoshtshik!" of some chance passenger makes them all grasp their whips in a moment, and converts them into eager competitors for the expected gain.

The poorest isvoshtshiks in St. Petersburg are the Finlanders. The droshky is often little more than a board nailed over the axles of their wheels, and their little shaggy, ragged, bony horses look like the very emblems of hunger and misery. Scarcely covered by their tattered caftans, they station themselves in the remote quarters of the town, and themselves poor, afford the use of their four wheels to poverty for a moderate fee. In the more fashionable and central quarters, on the other hand, equipages of first-rate elegance offer their service to the public, with everything about them *à quatre épingles*. A fine black steed, with a coat shining like satin, the harness glittering like a lady's ball-dress; a light delicate sledge, with a cloth richly lined with fur, and an isvoshtshik in a magnificent beard, and a caftan fit for a Turkish pacha. Such vehicles are not to be put in motion for anything less than a blue note, and are intended to impress a credulous public with the belief that they are private and not hired carriages; for in St. Petersburg it is thought *très mauvais genre* for a lady to allow herself to be driven by an isvoshtshik; and a woman above the rank of a chambermaid or a tradesman's wife would scarcely venture to make use of such a conveyance. The men are less particular. Even those of the highest station do not refuse, on an emergency, to avail themselves of the services of an isvoshtshik.

It is not customary for a Russian noble to put a livery on his coachman, who is almost always clad in the old national costume. If, therefore, you hire one of these smart isvoshtshiks, all you have to do is to order him to slip his number under his caftan, and nobody can tell whether the driver and his steed are not, bodies and soul of them, your undisputed freehold property. Indeed, these handsome equipages on the public stands are said

sometimes to be the private carriages of individuals, who, during their absence from the capital, convert their coachmen into *isvoshtshiks*. St. Petersburg is at all times crowded with civil and military officers, who are liable without any previous notice to be sent away suddenly to a distant part of the empire, and who are willing that their horses should earn their oats in the public service while their masters are away.

As there are no fixed fares, you must each time bargain with your driver when you hire him; but the fellows are, in general, moderate enough, and will take you a tolerably long way for a few pence. Their demands indeed are apt to rise in proportion as the weather becomes less inviting to pedestrianism, or as the calendar announces the recurrence of a public holiday. There are days when they will not bate a *copek* of their demands; and in the busy part of the day they will not take less than two rubles for a course, which in the morning or the evening they are ready to go for half a one. On ordinary occasions they are reasonable and obliging enough, and will often carry you for nothing from one side to the other of a muddy street.

You may know what countryman your *isvoshtshik* is by the way in which he treats his horses. The German is sure to be the most reasonable. He speaks little to any body, and to his horse not at all. His reins and his whip form the only medium of communication between the man and the animal. The Finlander sits a quiet picture of indifference, only now and then brings out a long drawling, "*Naw! naw!*" through his teeth, and from the varied intonations of the one word the horse is expected to divine the wishes of its master. The cabalistic word of the Lett is "*Nooa, nooa!*" but to this he has recourse only in moments of great emergency; when, for instance, his horse manifests a disposition not to stir from the spot, or a piggish determination to go any way rather than the way he is wanted to go. The most restless of charioteers is the Pole, who wriggles incessantly about, and whistles, hisses and howls without intermission, while the shaking of his reins and the cracking of his whip are kept up with equal perseverance. The Russian coachman, on the other hand, seems to trust more to the persuasiveness of his own eloquence than to anything else. He seldom uses his whip, and generally only knocks with it upon the foot-board of his sledge, by way of a gentle admonition to his steed, with whom mean while he keeps up a running colloquy, seldom giving him harder words than "my brother," "my friend," "my little father," "my sweetheart," "my little white pigeon," &c. "Come, my pretty pigeon, make use of thy legs," he will say. "What now? art blind? come be brisk! Take care of that stone there. Dost not see it? There, that's right. Bravo! hop, hop, hop! steady, boy, steady! Now, what art turning thy head aside for? Look out boldly before thee! Huzza! Yukh, yukh!"

One very important thing to know is, that our *isvoshtshik*, for

the period of the drive, has become our serf, and that if we are people to abuse our power, we may assume the lord and master with impunity. If we speak to him, he will never think of replying to us otherwise than bareheaded. Our scolding he receives with a cheerful and submissive smile, our commands with prompt obedience. If he is to drive faster, the intimation is conveyed to him in the way intimations are usually conveyed to slaves: namely, through the medium of his back, on which the hand of his temporary master writes down the order in a legible character. A Russian is born with a bridle round his neck, and every an whose hand is firm enough may seize the reins, and guide at his will the harnessed serf; but he whose hand is too weak to keep a tight hold of the reins, must be prepared to find more self-will about a Russian than about the citizen of the freest nation in the universe.

Though you speak no Russian you will seldom find it difficult to make yourself understood to your *isvoshtshik*, who is in general quite a cosmopolite and a man of the world, compared to those of his calling in other countries. He has had to deal with nearly all the nations of Asia in his time, and individuals from every country in Europe have held converse with him. Men of all orders and degrees, from the beggar to the emperor, have sat behind his back. He knows how to demean himself suitably to each, and has a smattering of every language. He knows a little Tartar and a little French; can understand some German, and is not altogether ignorant of English; and then, as to the language of eyes, fingers, and gesticulation, in these he is sure to be at home. If he have an Italian behind him, he will abuse his horse with an "*Ecco kakoi canaille, signor*," and a Mahometan he will be equally certain to commend to the protection of Allah.

The constant plague of the *isvoshtshik* is the pedestrian, who in Russia is invested with immense privileges. In other countries a man thinks himself bound to take care that he is not run over; but in Russia, he who walks afoot troubles himself but little about the matter, and thinks the coachman alone is bound to be careful. If the horse or carriage merely touch a foot passenger, without even throwing him down, the driver is liable to be flogged and fined; should the pedestrian be thrown down, a flogging, Siberia, and the confiscation of the whole equipage, are the mild penalties imposed by the law. "Have a care," cries the *isvoshtshik*. "Have a care thyself, and remember Siberia," is the probable reply of the leisurely wayfarer. The moment the cry is raised that a man has been run over, a brace of *butshniks* rush out from their watchboxes, and the carriage, whomever it may belong to, is carried away as a police prize. The poor coachman is immediately bound, and the flattering prospect of an emigration to Siberia is immediately held forth to him, whether the accident have arisen from his own fault or not. Cases of great severity sometimes occur; but it is difficult to point out

any other way of checking the wild way of driving in which the nobles frequently indulge. As it is, they are always urging their poor fellows to go faster, and the consequence is, that, wide as the streets are, and severe as the law is, accidents are constantly occurring, and every now and then you hear that this prince's fine four-in-hand is in the clutches of the police, or that that count's coachman is undergoing an inquiry.

I was once witness myself of a ludicrous scene to which the dread of these severe enactments gave rise. The equipage of the Countess T—— came rolling down the Nevskoi Prospekt, and had the misfortune to throw down a poor old woman, but, as was afterwards found, without doing her any other harm than frightening her. The ladies in the carriage fainted, but the coachman, having a lively picture of Siberia and the knout before his mind's eye, put his whip into motion immediately, and the horses dashed off at a full gallop. All the butshniks in the neighbourhood joined immediately in the chase, for on these occasions they give each other a signal. To seize the spirited horses by the reins was impossible; but a few of the servitors of the police, bolder than their fellows, clung to the carriage behind, in the hope, probably, that, as it must stop some time or other, they would be able to make good their prize in the end. Coach, coachman, and horses, appeared all irretrievably lost. Prince L——, an active young man and a friend of the countess, perceiving the danger to which she was exposed, rushed upon the carriage, and by main force tore away the two fellows that were clinging to it, and flung them into the snow. The butshniks, furious at the loss of their prize, now fell upon the poor prince, whom they dragged away to their wooden house; but he struggled and kept the door open till he recognised among the crowd some powerful acquaintance, through whose intercession he was enabled to escape the consequences of his good-natured infraction of the laws.

The world cannot present a more singular, or, in its way, a more magnificent spectacle, than the display of carriages in the Prospekt on a fine winter's day. The street is covered by a smooth hard surface of snow, over which the equipages rush silently along: the snorting of the steeds, and the admonishing ejaculations of the drivers, being the only sounds that are heard. There is something quite intoxicating in driving up and down through the wild bounding sea of equipages. The palaces on both sides are gaily arrayed by the beams of the sun; the street, though broad, is filled to overflowing; the equipages are of all kinds and dimensions; here a modest isvoshtshik dashes along with a spruce clerk or a smart chambermaid behind him; there a splendid coach-and-four, filled with ladies, moves more leisurely along, and seems, compared to our humble sledges, a man-of-war sailing proudly among a fleet of cock-boats. Coaches-and-two announce the less ostentatious merchant. Handsome single-horse



vehicles, mean while, are flying like lightning through the crowd, and "*Shivtiye! shivtiye!*" (Faster! faster!) is the constant cry of the well-starred magnificoes within. These are the generals and ministers hurrying to their offices and various appointments, and parading their diamonds in so modest an equipage, in imitation of the emperor, while their wives are using up the breath of four steeds at least. Nay, the emperor himself, enveloped in his cloak, but unobserved by none, may pierce the throng, for his affairs are numberless in all quarters of the town. "*Gossudar! gossudar!*" (The lord! the lord!) flies from mouth to mouth, and almost at the same moment the apparition has passed away. "*Padye! padye! padye!*" cry the little postilions, in a sharp and sustained note. A stranger, though he forget all else of Russian that he learned at St. Petersburg, will not forget the *padye*, *läviye*, *prüviye*, and *berējissa*, with which the charioteers steer their course through so arduous a navigation: and if there be nothing else which he has learned to love in Russia, he will at least love the recollection of his sledge-promenades, and will remember, with some kindness, his dexterous and willing *isvosh-tshik*.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WINTER.

In the year 1836, and in the month of December, a man threw a piece of apple-peel out of his little air window in Moscow. The peel of the apple did not reach the street, but happening to strike against the ledge of the window, froze fast to it, and remained icebound on its way from the window to the street, till it was set free by a thaw somewhere in the month of February, and was enabled to complete the journey on which it had set out six weeks and three days previously. This may afford a tolerable notion of the severity and perseverance of a Moscovite winter.

Such a thing could not have occurred in St. Petersburg, for in the marshy delta of the Neva the temperature is more variable than in central Russia. The icy winds that blow from Siberia are in some measure tempered by the influence of the Baltic. Rainy west winds, freezing north-easters, thick fogs, and cheerful frosty days, are succeeding each other constantly, and keep up a struggle for mastery throughout the whole of the six months' winter. A man is as little secure against rain and mud in January as against frost and snow in April. In Moscow, on the contrary, the sky was never known to drop a single tear of rain in December; and neither among the records of the city nor the traditions of its inhabitants will you trace one instance of a pair of boots having been spotted with mud in January.

In St. Petersburg, nevertheless, the thermometer falls much more frequently to a very low point than in Moscow, where the average temperature for the whole winter is considerably higher than in the newer capital. The climate of St. Petersburg oscillates continually between two extremes. In summer the heat often rises to  $+30^{\circ}$  ( $99^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit), and in winter the cold as often falls to  $-30^{\circ}$  ( $55^{\circ}$  below Fahrenheit's zero). This gives to the temperature a range of  $154^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit, which probably exceeds that of any other city in Europe. It is not merely in the course of the year, however, but in the course of the same twenty-four hours, that the temperature is liable to great variations. In summer, after a hot sultry morning, a rough wind will set in towards evening, and drive the thermometer down  $12^{\circ}$  \* immediately. In winter also there is often a difference of  $12^{\circ}$  or  $18^{\circ}$  between the temperature of the morning and that of the night. It would be impossible to preserve existence in such a climate, if man did not endeavour to counteract its fickleness by his own unchangeableness. In Germany, where the transitions are less sudden, we endeavour to follow the vagaries of the weather, by putting on a cloak one day and leaving it off the next, by putting an additional log or two into the stove, or by economising our fuel. In St. Petersburg people are less variable in their arrangements. The winter is considered to begin in October and end in May, and in the beginning of October every man puts on his furs, which are calculated for the severest weather that can come, and these furs are not laid aside again till the winter is legitimately and confessedly at an end. The stoves, meanwhile, are always kept heated in winter, that the house may never cool. Inconsiderate foreigners attempt sometimes to follow the caprices of the climate, and often pay for their temerity with illness and death.

It is only when the cold falls to an unusual degree of severity that any change takes place. When the thermometer stands at  $-20^{\circ}$  every man pricks up his ears, and becomes a careful observer of its risings and fallings. At  $-23^{\circ}$  or  $24^{\circ}$  the police are put on the alert, and the officers go round day and night, to see that the sentinels and butshniks keep awake. Should any one be found nodding at his post, he is summarily and severely punished, for sleep at such a time is a sure state of transition from life to death. At  $-25^{\circ}$  all the theatres are closed, as it is then thought impossible to adopt the necessary precautions for the safety of the actors on the stage, and of the coachmen and servants waiting in the street. The pedestrians, who at other times are rather leisurely in their movements, now run along the streets as though they were hastening on some mission of life and death, and the sledges dash in *tempo celeratissimo* over the creaking snow.

\* Throughout the present work, Reaumur's thermometer must always be understood to be the standard by which the temperature is measured. Each degree of Reaumur is equivalent to  $2\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit.

I don't know the reason, but 20° of cold in St. Petersburg signify a great deal more than in Germany, and are attended by more injurious consequences. Faces are not to be seen in the streets, for every man has drawn his furs over his head, and leaves but little of his countenance uncovered. Every one is uneasy about his nose and his ears; and as the freezing of these desirable appendages to the human face divine is not preceded by any uncomfortable sensation to warn the sufferer of his danger, he has enough to think of if he wish to keep his extremities in order. "Father, father, thy nose!" one man will cry to another as he passes him, or will even stop and apply a handful of snow to the stranger's face, and endeavour, by briskly rubbing the nasal prominence, to restore the suspended circulation. These are salutations to which people are accustomed, and as no man becomes aware of the fact when his own nose has assumed the dangerous chalky hue, custom prescribes, among all who venture into the streets, a kind of mutual observance of each other's noses: a custom by which many thousands of these valued organs are yearly rescued from the clutches of the Russian Bórcas. A man's eyes at this season cost him some trouble likewise, for they are apt to freeze up every now and then. On such occasions it is customary to knock at the door of the first house you come to, and ask permission to occupy a place for a few minutes by the stove. This is a favour never denied, and the stranger seldom fails to acknowledge it on his departure, by dropping a grateful tear on the hospitable floor.

At 20° of cold there are few St. Petersburg mothers who would allow their children to go into the open air. Ladies venture abroad only in close carriages, of which every aperture is closed by slips of fur. There are families at this season who will spend weeks without once tasting a mouthful of fresh air, and at last, when the cold has reached its extreme point, none are to be seen in the streets but the poorest classes, unless it be foreigners, people in business, or officers. As to these last, the parades and mountings of guard are never interrupted by any degree of cold; and while the frost is hard enough to cripple a stag, generals and colonels of the guard may be seen in their glittering uniforms moving as nimbly and as unconcernedly about the windy Admiralty-square, as though they were promenading a ball-room. Not a particle of a cloak must be seen about them; not a whisper of complaint must be heard. The emperor's presence forbids both, for he exposes himself unhesitatingly to wind, snow, hail, and rain, and expects from his officers the same disregard of the inclemencies of the season.

The Russian stoves are in their way the most complete things that can be imagined. They are built up with glazed tiles; and such are the multitudinous passages, ascending and descending, that before the heat emitted by the fire has found its way into the chimney, it has often a distance of a hundred feet in length

to pass through. The huge mass of stone which composes the stove is a long time before it gets warm; but once warm, it retains the heat for a whole day. Almost the only wood used in St. Petersburg as fuel is the wood of the birch-tree. It is the cheapest to be had in the neighbourhood, and its embers are more lasting than those of the pine or fir. Now, the embers are to a Russian stove of the greatest importance, for it is from the embers, and not from the flame, that the stove is expected to derive its heat. So long as the wood continues in a blaze, whatever quantity may have been put in, the stove never gets thoroughly warm; it is only when, by means of the *yushka* (a small plate of iron), the passage from the stove into the chimney has been hermetically closed, that the heat begins to be sensibly felt in the room. The Russian stove-heaters are extremely dexterous in all the details of their occupation. Tongs and shovels are unknown to them. Their only instrument is a long iron poker with a hook at the end of it. With this they keep stirring up the fiery mass, break up the embers, and pull forward the fragments of wood that are still burning, in order, by exposing them to the current of air, to accelerate their conversion. In every great house there is at least one servant whose exclusive duty it is to look after the stoves, and to collect and prepare the requisite fuel. In order that the family may have a warm room to take their coffee in, in the morning, it is necessary that the stove-heater should begin his labours at an early hour of the night. In general he builds up a pile of logs within each stove the evening before, that the wood may be well dried, and then he sets fire to it early in the morning. The stoves usually open upon long passages, which are thus as effectually heated as the rooms themselves.

If the *yushka* be closed before the wood be completely burnt into embers, a poisonous gas is emitted by the coals, and fatal consequences may ensue to those who are exposed to its influence. Such accidents do occasionally happen, and it is nothing uncommon in St. Petersburg to hear of people who have been suffocated by the fumes of their stoves; but when the immense number of those stoves is taken into consideration, and that every floor and every part of the house have to be warmed for at least six months of the year, it must be admitted that accidents occur but rarely, and that the stove-heaters must display an admirable degree of judgment in thus always selecting the right moment for closing the *yushka*. In autumn the houses are usually damp, and in consequence cool; but in December or January, after the stoves have all been in play for some months, every corner of a Russian house becomes thoroughly dry, and then behind the double windows and the threefold doors, there prevails throughout the day an equable, agreeable, and mild temperature of from  $14^{\circ}$  to  $15^{\circ}$ .

The erecting of one of these Russian stoves is a work of art, to

which it is not every man who is equal. Much consideration and no little judgment are required in suiting the locality of the stove to the distribution of the apartments. The most distinguished artists in this line are almost invariably natives of what is called Great Russia, and throughout the empire it is to them almost exclusively that an office is assigned of such importance in a Russian establishment.

In every Russian house the stove plays an important part, particularly so in the houses of the poor. There the stove is often of extraordinary dimensions, and serves for cooking and baking food, as well as for warming the room. Round it are placed benches, where at their leisure the inmates may enjoy the luxury of increased heat, for to these denizens of the north the imbibing of caloric is among the highest of enjoyments. In the stove itself a variety of niches and indentations are made, where various articles are laid to dry, and wet stockings and linen are constantly hanging about it. On the platform, at the top, lie beds, on which, wrapped up in their sheepskin cloaks, the inmates often abandon themselves to the twofold luxury of idleness and perspiration.

The Russian stoves, after all, however, are the most unpoetical, if not the least comfortable, of all the means by which human ingenuity has contrived to generate an artificial heat. The Spanish *braseiro*, the Italian *cammino*, the English fireside, and the half-open German stove, that affords at least a peep at the active minister within; all these form attractive centres, round which humanity congregates, and around which social converse is generated, and an interchange of ideas promoted, while the agreeable warmth of the flame is enjoyed. A Russian stove, on the contrary, is a mute, sulky-looking companion, whose enormous size makes it difficult ever to give him a graceful exterior. In general, the stove is a large, clumsy, oblong mass, that rises nearly to the ceiling of the room, to which it is a disfigurement rather than a decoration. In the houses of the rich, therefore, the stove is concealed as much as possible, by mirrors and other articles of furniture, or is made wholly invisible by being constructed within the partition wall.

The double windows, which are often found even in the houses of the poorest peasants, contribute greatly to the warmth of Russian houses. As early as October the house may be said to go into winter quarters. Double windows are affixed to every room; every aperture through which a little air might find its way is carefully covered, and slips of paper are pasted over the edges of all the windows. Here and there a window is so constructed that a single pane may now and then be opened to let in a little air. In this close and confined atmosphere the family live and have their being, till the returning May ushers in the first fine weather, and gives the signal that fresh air may again be permitted to circulate through the interior of the mansion.

In the intermediate space formed by the double windows it is customary to place sand or salt, either of which, by absorbing moisture, is supposed to increase the warmth. The salt is piled up in a variety of fanciful forms, and the sand is usually formed into a kind of garden decorated with artificial flowers. These bloom and blossom through the winter in their glassy cases; and as in these arrangements every family displays its own little fancies and designs, it may afford amusement to those who are not above being amused by trifles, to walk the streets on a fine winter morning, and admire the infinite variety of decorations presented by the double windows.

Quite as much care is expended upon the doors as upon the windows. It is a common thing to pass, not merely two, but three doors, before you enter the warmed passage of a house; and this is the case, not only in private houses, but also in public buildings, such as theatres, churches, &c.

The poor suffer far less from cold in St. Petersburg than in cities under a milder heaven. In different parts of the town there are large rooms, which are constantly kept warm, and to which every one has at all times free access. In front of the theatres large fires are kept burning for the benefit of coachmen and servants; but the furs and warm apparel in which even beggars are sure to be clad, and the air-and-water-tight construction of their houses, are the chief security of all classes against the severity of their climate. As soon as the thermometer falls to 25°, the sentinels all receive fur cloaks, in which they look grotesque enough, when marching up and down in front of the palaces. With all these precautions, however, the intense cold that sometimes prevails for weeks together converts many a specimen of living humanity into a senseless statue of ice. This is owing more to the manners of the people than to the want of suitable protection: to drunkenness and idleness among the poor, and to hard-heartedness, or more properly to inconsiderateness, among the rich.

The Russians, with all their liveliness of character, are by no means fond of any kind of exertion; and all gymnastics, whether mental or bodily, are odious to them. In cold weather they creep behind the stove, or bury themselves in furs, instead of battling against the frost with their arms and legs, as those of any other nation would do. The butshnik creeps into his wooden house; the soldier, if he dare, into his sentry-box; and the isvoshtshik rolls himself up into a sort of tangled ball, under the mats of his sledge. In these positions many of them are surprised by sleep, and fall victims to the frost. The sentinel is found an inanimate statue in his box, the butshnik is drawn forth a mere mummy, and the poor driver is taken a petrified cripple from his sledge. The immoderate use of spirits, in which the lower people indulge, very much augments the danger. The great majority of those who are frozen to death are the victims

of intoxication. A severe frost never sets in in St. Petersburg without finding a number of drunken men sleeping in the streets; and sleep on such an occasion is the usual stage of transition to death. The inconsiderate conduct of the rich towards their servants is another and a frequent cause of death. It is incredible how much the poor coachmen, footmen, and postilions, are expected to endure. People will often go to the theatre, or to a party, and leave their equipages in the street the whole evening, that they may be able to command their services at a moment's notice. The coachman then finds it difficult to resist the inclination to sleep; and the little twelve-year-old postilions, not yet accustomed to watch till midnight, hang slumbering on their horses, or, winding the reins round their arms, slip down and lie cowering on the frozen snow. Many a poor coachman has thus lost his nose, or has had his hands and feet disabled, while his master was feasting his palate or his ears, or indulging a voluptuous sympathy for fictitious sorrow. Fortunately for the Russian serf, the freezing to death is one of the easiest and least painful deaths which he is ever likely to suffer. Nay, some say that the sensation which accompanies it is not without some degree of enjoyment, and those who are roused from the slumber which in these cases usually precedes death, seldom show at first any thankfulness to those who have disturbed them in their passage to another world.

Extreme cold is usually accompanied by cheerful and quiet weather, so that the magnificent city of St. Petersburg rarely appears to greater advantage than when the thermometer stands at 30° below Reaumur's zero (35° below Fahrenheit's), when the sun shines brilliantly in a clear sky, while its rays are reflected by millions of icy crystals. From houses and churches dense columns of smoke slowly ascend. The snow and ice in the streets and on the Neva are white and clean, and the whole city seems clothed in the garments of innocence. Water becomes ice almost in the act of being poured upon the ground. Every one in the streets appears to be running for his life, and indeed is literally doing so, for it is only by running that he can hope to keep life in him. The trodden snow crackles and murmurs forth the strangest melodies, and every sound seems to be modified by the influence of the atmosphere.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MARKETS.

THE Russians have a custom very agreeable to one desirous of buying; namely, the custom of offering for sale within the same building almost everything that is likely to be bought. A stranger

need not, therefore, inquire where this or that article is to be found: all he has to do, in general, is to go to one of the great markets or bazaars, and he will seldom fail to find the article he is in search of. Provisions are, of course, excepted, for which there are distinct markets.

The great bazaars of a Russian town, where all the most important articles of commerce are united, are called *gostinnoye dvorui*. They are mostly large buildings, consisting of a ground floor and an upper floor. The upper floor is generally reserved for wholesale dealings; the ground floor consists of a multitude of booths or shops in which the various descriptions of merchandise are sold by retail. The dwellings of the merchants are away from these markets; and when the business hours are at an end, each merchant locks up his own stall, and commits the whole building for the night to the guardianship of watchmen and dogs.

In every Russian city of any importance, there is sure to be one such *gostinnoi dvor*, the extent of which may afford the travelling student in statistics a very fair standard by which to measure the commercial activity of the place. Even in the German cities of the Baltic provinces, as in Mittau, Dorpat, &c. the Russians have established such *gostinnoye dvorui*, and it is only in the maritime cities, as in Odessa, Riga, Liban, &c. that they are not yet to be found.

Nowhere do the *parcs* congregate more with the *paribus* than in Russia. Not only are the merchants thus collected together under one roof, but the community thus formed is again split up into a variety of fractions, those who deal in similar articles keeping closely together. This holding of like to like seems almost innate with the Russians; for those articles which, on account of their bulky nature, are excluded from the *gostinnoi dvor*, such as ironware, firewood, furniture, &c. have each of them separate markets of their own, which are known by the generic term of *rüdi*. It is the same with the *ruinoks*, or provision markets, of which there are distinct ones for meat, for fish, for hay, for eggs, and so on.

The *gostinnoi dvor* will be found for the most part to occupy a very central position in a Russian city, while the secondary markets are removed towards the outskirts. The *gostinnoi dvor* it must, however, be borne in mind, offers for sale only articles of domestic or of Asiatic production. The fabrics of western Europe seldom find a place there, but are usually retailed in shops situated in the most frequented streets. In the great provincial cities, the private shops are completely eclipsed by the *gostinnoi dvor*; but not so in the comparatively Europeanised St. Petersburg, though even there, the goods displayed in the principal market far exceed, both in quantity and in value, those that will be found in all the private shops put together.

The colossal building of which we have been speaking has one side in the Nevskoi Prospekt, and another in the Bolkhaia



Sadovaïa, or Great Garden-street, through which and some of the adjoining streets it extends a number of ramifications of shops and booths, giving to that part of the town, throughout the year, the appearance of a perpetual fair. The better description of Russian goods will all be found in the *gostinnoi dvor*; those of inferior value in the adjoining markets, the *Apraxin Ruinok* and the *Tshukin Dvor*, which lie a little farther on in the *Bolkhaïa Sadovaïa*. Following the last-named street, which is bordered throughout its whole length by shops and booths, we at last arrive at an open place, the *Sennaïa Ploshtshod* or Hay Place, which may be considered the principal provision market of St. Petersburg.

In the same way, in passing along the *Prospëkt*, shops and booths present themselves in a constant succession to our view. When we have passed the silver shops we come to the dealers in fruit, then to the iron vaults; these are followed by the carriage magazines, the *depôts* for wood and coals, the furniture dealers, and so on, till in the vicinity of the *Nevski monastery* we arrive at the *Simnaïa Ploshtshod* or Winter Market, with its endless store of sledges and waggons. In the same quarter are also the Horse Market and the Cattle Market. There are a few markets in other quarters, such as the *Krugloi Ruinok* or Round Market, but these are comparatively of little importance.

The *gostinnoi dvor* is well deserving of a stranger's attention, not merely on account of the various goods offered for sale: many of them of a kind unknown to other parts of Europe, but also on account of the mixed crowd constantly moving about, and of the characteristic civility of the dealers, and their unwearied endeavours to overreach their customers. All these things make this quarter of St. Petersburg one of the most amusing and instructive lounges for a stranger desirous to study the character of the people and their city.

All the lanes and alleys that intersect the *gostinnoi dvor* are deluged throughout the day by a stream of sledges and *droshkies*, in which the cooks, the stewards, and the other servants of the great houses, come to make their daily purchases. In a city containing half a million of inhabitants, there must at all times be a great and urgent demand for a vast variety of articles, but there are many reasons why this should be more the case in St. Petersburg than in any other capital. In the first place, there is no other European capital where the inhabitants are content to make use of goods of such inferior quality, or where, consequently, they have such frequent occasion to buy new articles, or to have the old ones repaired. Then there is no other capital where the people are so capricious and so fond of change. The wealthy Russians are here one day and gone the next; now travelling for the benefit of their health, now repairing to the country to re-establish their finances by a temporary retirement, and then re-appearing on the banks of the *Neva*, to put their

hundreds of thousands into circulation. This constant fluctuation leads daily to the dissolution and to the formation of a number of establishments, and makes it necessary that there should be at all times a greater stock of all things necessary to the outfit of a family than would be requisite in a town of equal extent, but of a more stable population.

A Russian seldom buys anything till just when he wants to use it, and as he cannot then wait, he must have it ready to his hand. Boots, saddlery, wearing-apparel, confectionery, and other articles, which with us are generally ordered beforehand from a tradesman, are here bought ready for immediate use. Each article has its separate row of shops, and the multitude of these rows is so great, that a stranger may often be heard to inquire: "My little father, where is the row of fur booths?" "My little mother, where is the cap row?" "Pray show me the stocking row?" "My little father, tell me the way to the petticoat row?"

If the throng of buyers is calculated to amuse a stranger, he will be likely to find still more diversion as he lounges along the corridors, in observing the characteristic manners of the merchants. These *gostinnoi dvor* merchants are almost invariably flaxen-haired, brown-bearded, shrewd fellows in blue caftans and blue cloth caps: the costumes uniformly worn by merchants throughout Russia. They are constantly extolling their wares in the most exaggerated terms to those who are passing by: "What is your pleasure, sir? Clothes? I have them here; the very best, and all of the newest fashion." "Here are hats of the first quality, and by the best makers." "Kasan loots of the choicest description: *isvolye, isvolye!*" "Shto vam ugodno 'ss? (what would suit you?) a bear-skin, a fox-skin, or a cloak of wolf-skin? You will find everything here; pray walk in." Cap-in-hand, they are always ready to open their doors to every passer-by, and are incessant in the exercise of their eloquence, whatever may be the rank, station, or age of those they address. They will not hesitate to offer a bear-skin mantle to a little fellow scarcely strong enough to carry it, recommend their coarsely-fashioned boots to a passing dandy, invite an old man to purchase a child's toy, or solicit a young girl to carry away a sword or a fowling-piece. Where the merchant does not act as his own crier, he usually entertains somebody to officiate in his place; and it may easily be imagined what life and animation these constant cries and solicitations must give to the whole market. Preachers and actors have generally a tone peculiar to their several classes; and even so has the *gostinnoi dvor* merchant, whose voice may be known afar off, but who immediately alters that tone when a fish shows a disposition to fasten on the bait, for then commences a more serious discussion of the merits and quality of his merchandise.

No light or fire is allowed in the building, unless it be the sacred lamps that are kept burning before the pictures of the

saints, and which are supposed to be too holy to occasion any danger. The merchants are, in consequence, often exposed to intense cold, but this they endure with admirable fortitude and cheerfulness. Over their caftans, it is true, they put on a close fur coat of white wolf-skin: a piece of apparel worn by every gostinnoi dvor merchant, of the same cut and material.

Even without including the peasants who offer provisions for sale, there are probably not much less than ten thousand merchants and dealers of different degrees assembled in the gostinnoi dvor of St. Petersburg and its dependent buildings. Of these people, few have their household establishments in the vicinity of the market, yet all have the wants of hunger to satisfy in the course of the day; and it may therefore be easily imagined that a host of servicable traders have attached themselves to the establishment for the mere convenience of the merchants. Among the streets and lanes of the bazaar there are constantly circulating retailers of tea with their large steaming copper urns; quass sellers; together with dealers in bread, sausages, cheese, &c.; and all these people receive constant encouragement from the ever hungry *kupshi*. Careworn looks are as little seen in this market as grumbling tones are heard; for a Russian seldom gives house-room to care or melancholy, and yet more rarely gives utterance to a complaint. Nor indeed has he occasion; for in this rising country, *Slava Bogu!* (God be thanked!) be the merchandise ever so bad, trade goes on nevertheless. In other countries, a merchant relies upon the goodness of his merchandise for custom; the Russian speculator, I firmly believe, calculates that the worse his wares the sooner will his customers want to renew their stock.

The Russian is by nature a light-hearted creature, and by no means given to reflection. You will seldom see the gostinnoi dvor merchant engaged with writings or calculations. If not occupied by a customer, or busy in his endeavours to attract one, you will mostly find him romping, playing, or jesting with his brother traders. In fine weather, draughts is their favourite game; and, for greater convenience, the chequered field is often painted on the tables or benches that stand before their booths. They eagerly thrust their heads together, examine the position of the pieces with the air of connoisseurs, bet on one player or the other, and seem completely absorbed in the game, until a purchaser makes his appearance, when the group is broken up in a moment, and each endeavours, with an infinity of bowings and assurances, to gain for his own shop the honour of the stranger's custom. In winter they often warm themselves in the roomy passages of the bazaar with a game at football, or crowd together round the steaming *samovar*, and sip down cans full of hot tea. Sometimes they amuse themselves with their nightingales and other singing birds, of which they have always a great number about them; and sometimes—well, sometimes they fold their caf-

tans leisurely about them, stretch forth their arms, and indulge themselves in—a yawn; but they never neglect, every now and then, to step before their *bog*, or saint, and, with a devout inclination of the body, to pray to him for success in trade.

With the exception of furs, many of which are of excellent quality, there are in the *gostinnoi dvor*, properly so called, few but the iron and wax shops where the articles are thoroughly Russian. Most of the merchandise consists of bad imitations of foreign fabrics. As the goods, so the customers. Both are Europeanised, for there is little in the Frenchified *soubrettes*, the lacques in livery, the *employés* in uniform, and the foreign teachers, to remind one of Russian nationality; but a little farther on, when you enter the gates of the Apraxin Ruinok and the Tshukin Dvor, you come to bazaars where sellers, buyers, and wares are all equally and entirely Russian; and here, in the very centre of the palaces and plate glass of St. Petersburg, in this capital of princes and magnates, there unfolds itself to your view a motley dirty populace, precisely similar to what may be supposed to have thronged the fairs of Novgorod in the middle ages, or may still be seen in the bazaars of any of the provincial cities of Russia.

The population of St. Petersburg, from the highest to the lowest, is constantly changing. The stationary portion is by far the least numerous: the majority look upon the city only as a temporary residence. The nobles are ever coming and going; foreigners hope to enrich themselves that they may return to their native countries; the garrison, and all attached to it, must always be prepared to change their quarters; the civil servants of the government seldom remain long at one post, but are liable at a few days' notice to be ordered off to the most remote provinces; and the lower classes, such as servants, mechanics, and labourers, are, for the most part, serfs, who have received only a temporary leave of absence, at the expiration of which they are expected to return to the estates to which they belong. Even the *isvoshtshiks* in the streets are a nomadic race, plying for custom this year in St. Petersburg, the next in Moscow, and the succeeding one perhaps in Odessa or Astrakhan. St. Petersburg, in fact, like most Russian cities, is a place of rendezvous, where men congregate for a time; but, not like our German cities, a home in which families attach themselves like ivy to the stone walls, and vegetate away for centuries. The mass of the people of St. Petersburg undergoes a complete change in less than ten years; and to this constant fluctuation I attribute the vast extent of the rag-fair, and the astonishing quantity of old furniture and old clothes, which are sold at a low price by those who take their departure, and disposed of again at a handsome profit to the newly-arrived.

Thousands enter the city daily, without knowing whether on the morrow they shall become cooks or carpenters, masons or

musicians; or whether, on stripping off their village dress, they shall assume the livery of a lacquey, or the caftan of a merchant. For all their wants, the Apraxin *Ruinok* and the Tshukin Dvor are prepared. Nay, should a Samoïede from Siberia, or a Huron from America, come naked into these ruinoks, he may leave them again in a few minutes, provided with every imaginable article necessary to equip him as a civilised Russian; for ill as sounds the name of *vosheroi ruinok*, which in St. Petersburg is generally given to these markets, and which I will not here translate to my readers, lest they should conceive an unfair prejudice against the place, still it would be a great mistake to suppose that nothing but what was old and ragged was here exposed for sale.

These two markets occupy a piece of ground about one thousand five hundred feet square, containing, therefore, a surface of rather more than two millions of square feet. The whole is so closely covered with stalls and booths, that nothing but narrow lanes are left between; and supposing each booth, including the portion of lane in front of it, to occupy five hundred square feet, which is certainly making a very liberal allowance, it would follow that there must be within the two bazaars nearly five thousand booths, tents, and stalls. These form a city of themselves. The tops of the booths frequently project and meet those that are opposite to them, making the little lanes between as dark as the alleys of the Jews' quarters in some of our old German towns, or like the streets of many an oriental city at the present day. Through narrow gates you pass from the busy Garden-street into this gloomy throng, where a well-dressed human being might be looked for in vain; where all are "black people," all bearded, furred, and thoroughly un-European.

Under the gateways are suspended large lamps and gaudy pictures of saints, and these present themselves anew at every corner as you proceed through the lanes of the market. Here and there you come to an open space in which a little chapel has been erected, and so gaily fitted up, you would fancy a Chinese pagoda had served for the model. All this, however, is insufficient to content the piety of the Russians, who often build a wooden bridge between two opposite booths for the convenience of suspending a few additional lamps and saints. By the side of the chapel there is seldom wanting that other building which, next to the chapel, is the most indispensable to a Russian: namely, the *kabak* or brandy-shop, which is often very gaily decorated, and where spirits, beer, and quass may constantly be had.

"Slip your arms into your fur sleeves, and button your beaver collar closely about your ears," said my companion to me, the first time I ventured into the ruinok, for I had allowed those articles of my wardrobe to hang loosely behind, as is the usual custom in Russia. "We are here," he continued, "in the thieves' quarter of St. Petersburg, and everything that is left loose is considered a fair prize. Put your rings into your pocket, for

there are those who would cut off your finger for the sake of the gold; and if it were known where you carried your pocket-book, you would have a hole in your cloak immediately." Indeed, common fame says that people have sometimes been strangely clipped and cut by the hordes who occupy these wild regions; but so far as I am concerned, I am bound to say that nothing of the kind ever happened to me, though I have often enough, and carelessly enough, wandered through the mazes of this great labyrinth of a fair.

Here also, in the true Russian spirit, like has paired with like. In one corner, for instance, all the dealers in sacred images have congregated. The Russians, who believe themselves abandoned by God and all good angels as soon as they are without his visible and tangible presence, or, rather, who think every place the devil's own ground until the priest has driven him out of it, and who, therefore, decorate their bodies, their rooms, their doors, and their gates, as well as their churches, with sacred images, require, of course, a very large and constant supply of the article, of which, in fact, the consumption is enormous. The little brass crosses, and the Virgins, the St. Johns, the St. Georges, and other amulets, may be seen piled up in boxes like gingerbread nuts at a fair. On the walls of the booths are hung up pictures of all sorts and sizes, radiant with mock gold and silver. Some are only a few inches in length and breadth. Of these a nobleman's footman will buy a few scores at a time, as necessary to the fitting up of a new house, for in every room a few of these holy little articles must be nailed up against the wall. For village churches, for private chapels, and for devout merchants of the old faith, there are pictures of several ells square, before which a whole household may prostrate themselves at their ease. Some are neatly set in mahogany frames of modern fashion, others are still adorned in the good old style, with pillars, doors, and temples of silver wire; some are new, and from the pencils of students of the newly-established St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, but the greater part are old, and present figures often nearly obliterated by the dust and smoke of centuries. To these it is, particularly when they can be warranted to have once adorned the wall of a church, that the lower orders in Russia attach the greatest value: just as our German peasants prefer an old, dirty, well-thumbed hymn-book to one just fresh from the binder's.

In another part of the market will be found a whole quarter of fruit-shops, in which an incredible quantity of dried fruit is offered for sale. Each of these shops is as oddly decorated as its fellows. In the centre, on an elevated pedestal, there stands generally a rich battery of bottles and boxes of conserves, mostly manufactured at Kiev. Round the walls, in small boxes, the currants, raisins, almonds, figs, and oranges are arranged, while huge sacks and chests of prunes, nuts, and juniper-berries, retire more modestly into corners; and large tuns full of *glukvi*, a small red

berry of which the Russians are passionately fond, stand sentinels at the door. These are mostly sold in winter, when they are generally frozen to the consistency of flint stones, and are measured out with wooden shovels to amateurs. Inside and outside, these shops are decorated with large festoons of mushrooms, at all times a favourite dish with the common people in Russia. I am surprised that no good artist should ever have chosen one of these picturesque Russian fruit-shops for the subject of his pencil. Such a booth, with its bearded dealers and its no less bearded customers, would make an admirable *tableau de genre*; but the painters of St. Petersburg, I suppose, find it more profitable to cover their canvass with one insipid set of features after another, and to expend all the gorgeousness of their colouring on the uniforms and diamonds of the upper strata of society.

Go on a little farther, and you come to whole rows of shops full of pretty bridal ornaments; gay metal wedding-crowns, such as it is customary during the ceremony to place upon the heads of bride and bridegroom, and artificial wreaths and flowers, of a very neat fabric, and all at very reasonable prices. A whole garland of roses, for instance, tastefully interwoven with silver wire, at eighty copcks, or little more than sixpence. A bride might here be handsomely decorated from head to foot for a few shillings; and as, among the humbler classes of St. Petersburg, some thirty weddings are daily solemnized, without speaking of other festive celebrations, it may easily be conceived what piles of ornaments of various kinds are constantly kept on hand to supply the wants of brides and bridesmaids, birthday guests, and the like.

Whole groups of shops are filled with perfumes, incense, and various articles for fumigation; others with honey from Kasan and Tulo, neatly laid out in wooden vessels, some as clean as the milk pans in the caves of Homer's Cyclops; while others, of a less attractive look, remind one rather of Limburg cheese in an advanced state of decay.

However perilous in this market may be the condition of finger-rings and the pendant articles of a visiter's costume, the ducats and silver rubles on the tables of the money-changers must enjoy a tolerable security; for these tables are seen at every corner, with the different descriptions of coin set forth in tempting little piles, while throngs are passing to and fro, among whom, one would suppose, a few knaves might easily gratify their *amor nummi* by a sudden scramble, with a very fair prospect of escaping immediately afterwards in the crowded avenues of the market. An apparently accidental push, and all the rich garniture of the table would lie scattered in the dirt; and while all were busy in assisting the banker in the recovery of his capital, who would be able to point out the dexterous thief who had appropriated a few rubles to his private use? Yet these money-changers must feel secure in their avocation, or one would hardly see tables, with

thousands of rubles upon them, committed to the care of boys scarcely twelve years old. The Russian rogue will pass off the worst merchandise at the highest price with an unscathed conscience; nor will he hesitate, if opportunity serve, to transfer another's purse to his own pocket; but the tables of these money-changers seem to stand under the aegis of the public. I have myself seen a table accidentally overthrown by the pressure of the crowd, when the sheepskin multitude around joined in aiding the juvenile banker to re-collect his scattered treasure, and all the gold and silver and copper coins were carefully picked up, till not a copek was missing.

The pastry-cooks also have their quarter in this market, where they vend the oily fish pirogas of which the bearded Russians are so passionately fond. Here little benches are ranged around the table on which are placed the dainty delicacies, covered with oily pieces of canvass, for the piroga to be properly enjoyed must be eaten warm. A large pot of green oil and a salt-stand of no ordinary size, are the indispensable accompaniments to the feast. Pass one of these shops, and throw an accidental glance at his wares, and the merchant will be sure to anticipate your desires; quickly he will plunge his tempting cake into the oil pot, scatter a pinch of salt upon the dripping mass, and present it to you with the air of a prince. The sheep-skinned bearded Moscovite will rarely be able to resist the temptation; he will seat himself on one of the benches, and one rich savoury piroga after another will wend its way down his throat, till his long and well-anointed beard becomes as bright and glossy as a piece of highly-polished ebony. Some of my readers may turn with disgust from the picture here presented to them; but, for my own part, I was always too much amused by the wit and *politesse* of these oil-lickers, to expend much indignation on their repulsive wares. Even the coarsest and dirtiest article of merchandise will be presented with a courtly and insinuating demeanour by these rough-looking bearded fellows; even a greasy piroga, dripping with green oil, will be accompanied by a neatly-turned compliment or a lively jest, and the few copeks paid for it will be sure to be received with expressions of the warmest thankfulness.

Every article almost in the Tolkutshi Ruinok may be described as cheap and nasty, and yet what vistas of yet worse and worse wares unfold themselves as you wander on to the outskirts of the market, where disbanded apparel and invalided furniture are exposed for sale! Things may be seen there, of which it is difficult to imagine that they can still retain a money value. Rags, bits of ribbon, fragments of paper, and broken glass; clothes that the poorest *isvoshtshik* has thought himself bound to lay aside. Yet all these things, and others, which a *gostinnoi dvor* merchant would scarcely use except to warm his stove, are not arranged without some show of taste and elegance, nor are they offered without a multitude of civil speeches and lofty panegyrics to the



barefooted beggar, to the gipsy and Jewess, who timidly hover around the rich repositories, and cast many a longing glance at the many things with which they might cover their nakedness or decorate their huts, but the possession of which they are unable to purchase with the copper coin within their grasp. The crumbs swept from the tables of the rich are here gathered together; and though the joint-stock of many of these shops be not worth one of the blue notes staked at a card-table in the salon of a noble, yet each article has its estimated value, below which it will not be parted with; no, not by one quarter of a copeck.

Perhaps for a stranger the most interesting portion of this world of markets is that of the Tshukin Dvor, where the birds are sold. Two long rows of booths are full of living specimens of ornithology: pigeons, fowls, geese, ducks, swans, larks, bullfinches,\*siskins, and hundreds of other singing birds are there collected, and form the most picturesque and variegated aviaries that can be imagined. Each booth is of wood, and open in the front, so that the whole of its contents may be seen at once by the passing stranger, who is saluted with such a concert of cackling, crowing, chattering, cooing, piping, and warbling, as would suffice to furnish the requisite supply of idyllic melodies for a hundred villages. Between the opposite booths are usually such bridges as I have already described, from which the pictures of saints are suspended, for the edification of the devout. On these bridges, and on the roofs of the booths, whole swarms of pigeons are constantly fluttering about, the peaceful Russian being a great lover of this gentle bird. Each swarm knows its own roof, and the birds allow themselves to be caught without much difficulty, when a bargain is about to be concluded. The pigeon is never eaten by a Russian, who would hold it a sin to harm an animal in whose form the Holy Ghost is said to have manifested himself. Pigeons are bought, therefore, only as pets, to be fed and schooled by their masters. It is curious to see a Russian merchant directing the flight of his docile scholars. With a little flag fastened to a long staff he conveys his signals to them, makes them at his will rise higher in the air, fly to the right or left, or drop to the ground as if struck by a bullet from a rifle.

The poor little singing birds—the larks, nightingales, linnets, bullfinches, &c.—must be of a hardier race than in more southern lands; for in spite of the bitter frost they chirrup away merrily, and salute with their songs every straggling ray of sunshine that finds its way into their gloomy abodes. The little creatures receive during the long winter not one drop of water, for it would be useless to offer them what a moment afterwards would be converted into a petrified mass. Their little troughs are accordingly filled only with snow, which they must liquefy in their own beaks when they wish to assuage their thirst.

Moscow is famed for its cooks, and here the Moscow cook may be seen proudly stalking about, in cages and out of them. The

best pigeons are said to come from Novgorod, and Finland furnishes the chief supply of singing birds. Geese are brought even from the confines of China, to be sold as rarities in the Tshukin Dvor, after a journey of more than four thousand miles. Gray squirrels may be seen rolling about in their cages like incarnate quicksilver; while rabbits and guinea-pigs without number gambol their time away in their little wooden hutches. Within the booth, a living centre of all this living merchandise, behold the merchant, closely enshrouded in his wolf-skin, and ready to dispose of his little feathered serfs at any acceptable price. At the back of the booth, be sure there hangs a saintly picture of some sort, its little lamp shedding a cheerful light to guard the feathered crowd against the evil influence of intruding demons; but there are evil spirits that the good saint cannot banish. Man is there, to hold in chains or to sentence to death, according as it may suit his calculations of profit, or the caprices of his palate. On shelves around are ranged the tropic birds of his murderous tube, and the northern swans, the heathcocks (*repshiki*), and the snow-white partridges (*kuraputki*), are piled up under the very cages from which the captive larks warble their limpid notes.

It is astonishing what a number of these birds are yearly consumed at the luxurious tables of St. Petersburg. To winter the cold keeps the meat fresh, and at the same time facilitates its conveyance to market. The partridges come mostly from Saratoff, the swans from Finland; Livonia and Esthonia supply heathcocks and grouse, and the wide steppes must furnish the trapp geese which flutter over their endless plains, where the Cossack hunts them on horseback, and kills them with his formidable whip. All these birds, as soon as the life-blood has ebbed, are converted as into stone by the frost, and, packed up in large chests, are sent for sale to the capital. Whole sledge-loads of snow-white hares find their way to the market. The little animals are usually frozen in a running position, with their ears pointed, and their legs stretched out before and behind, and when placed on the ground, look, at the first glance, as if they were in the act of escaping from the hunter. Bears' flesh also is sometimes offered for sale in this market, and here and there may be seen a frozen reindeer lying in the snow by the side of a booth, its hairy snout stretched forth upon the ground, its knees doubled up under its body, and its antlers rising majestically into the air. It looks as if, on our approaching it, it would spring up, and dash away once more in search of its native forests. The mighty elk, likewise, is no rare guest in this market, where it patiently presents its antlers as a perch for the pigeons that are fluttering about, till, little by little, the axe and the saw have left no fragment of the stately animal, but every part of it has gone its way into the kitchens of the wealthy.

Similar markets for birds and game will be found in every large Russian city. Indeed, the habits and fashions of the Russian

markets are completely national. Those of Moscow vary but little from those of Tobolsk; and Irkutsk, Odessa, and Archangel have shown themselves equally servile in their imitation of the metropolitan bazaars.

From the Gostinnoi Dvor, as has already been said, the booths and stalls of the merchants are planted along the sides of the Sadovaia, or Garden-street, to a considerable distance. After passing a row of toy-shops we come to the booksellers—that is to say, to the vendors of Russian literature; for the German and French booksellers, as dealers in foreign merchandise, have their locality in the Prospekt.

Next come the dealers in cloth, a seemingly interminable succession of booths, hung with all kinds of cloths and draperies, that the half darkness within may be less likely to betray the worthlessness of the merchant's wares.

Passing these, we arrive at some hardware and clock shops, though the latter have formed their chief lodgment in the Gostinnoi Dvor, where the clocks are marshalled on shelves, in due order and in long lines, from the treble of the shrill-toned dwarf to the capacious bulk and voluminous voice of the double bass. "In long lines," I repeat it, for everything with the Russians is long. Long are the lines of houses in their streets, long are the lines of their soldiers, long—oh, how long!—are their regiments of verst-posts (*anglivè*, mile-stones); their buildings are long and drawn out; and long, very long, are their caravans of waggons on the road. Breadth, depth, and elevation, indeed, are wanting. Therefore it is that everything among them is without substance or durability. Nothing is close, compact, solid, or exalted; everything is long, flat, smooth; the whole country is stiff and sharp-cornered, and has the air of having passed through the hands of the drill-sergeant.

Last of all come the vendors of wax candles, which are exhibited for sale in all forms and sizes. Some are thick enough to be placed in the facade of a temple, while others are almost as thin as spun silk. These are the merchants whose trade is, apparently, among the best in St. Petersburg. Their dealings augment in proportion as the Greek-Russian Church extends her dimensions. The nations that in later times have been baptized in the Russian name all require a constant supply of wax, of which their new faith teaches them to burn away vast quantities for the good of their souls. The recent transition of the Lithuanian Church to the national faith; the numberless proselytes whom the Russians are constantly gaining over; the churches built and building in all the new colonies, in Siberia, in the steppes, and in the capital itself; all these lead to a constant demand for wax candles of the genuine ecclesiastical mould. The wax, mostly purified with great care, arrives at Moscow in cakes of two poods in weight. There it is bleached, for in St. Petersburg there are no wax bleachers, the Finnish sun being itself too

well bleached to have much effect in bleaching anything else. The wax tapers themselves are often covered with ornaments. Some are gilt, others are spun round with gold and silver thread, and others again have small pieces of coloured glass let into them, to cheat the eye with the semblance of precious stones.

Having passed the wax lights, we arrive at the spacious hay market (*Sennaia Ploshtshod*), with its stately church. This place is remarkable as the only spot in which a barricade was ever erected in St. Petersburg, in consequence of a popular insurrection. This was in 1832, when the cholera raged here, and when the mobility of the capital, who make the hay market their daily lounge, were seized with the notion that prevailed in so many other great cities of Europe, that not God but the doctors had brought the pestilence among them. The physicians were supposed to be poisoning the people; and these, excited by their own absurd suspicions, broke out one morning into open insurrection. The frantic mob of gray-beards ran wildly about the neighbouring streets, seized upon the cholera carts, made the patients get out, set the horses loose, and after breaking the vehicles, threw the fragments into the *Fontanka*. and then fortified the market-place by erecting barricades of hay-waggons at the several entrances. The insurgents passed the night behind their entrenchments, resolved, on the following morning, to deal with the doctors as they had dealt with the carts. Early in the morning, accordingly, the great cholera hospital was attacked and taken by storm. The physicians, mostly Germans, were thrown from the windows, and torn to pieces by the mob; and the patients were conveyed to their homes, that they might be freed from the clutches of their supposed tormentors. Shortly afterwards the emperor arrived from *Zarskoye Selo*, and immediately repaired to the market in an open carriage, unattended by any military escort. The barricades disappeared at his approach. His carriage drew up at the entrance of the church, where he prayed and crossed himself, and then addressed to the multitude a few words, which were duly chronicled at the time in most of the newspapers of Europe. He bade the people kneel down and pray to God to forgive them their sins; and all that lately so tumultuous multitude knelt down at the command of their sovereign, and unresistingly allowed the police to come among them, and quietly convey the ringleaders of the riot to prison.

Without pausing to comment on a scene so illustrative of the influence which the sovereign exercises over the minds of the Russian people, let us enter the market itself, and examine the unwashed throng, by which it is filled to such a degree that the police have some trouble to keep a passage clear in the centre for the equipages constantly coming and going. On one side of this passage stand the sellers of hay, wood, and, in spring, plants and shrubs. On the other side are the peasants, with their stores of meat, fish, butter, and vegetables. Between these two rows

are the sledges and equipages whose owners come to make the daily purchases, and depart laden with herbs and vegetables, the bleeding necks of the poultry often presenting a singular contrast to the brilliant carriages from whose windows they are listlessly dangling. Along the fronts of the houses, mean while, are arrayed the dealers in quass and pastry, together with the beer and tea stalls, at which the peasants never fail to expend a portion of their gains.

The stables of St. Petersburg contain seldom less than from thirty thousand to forty thousand horses, without including those of the garrison. The animal wants of some fifty thousand or sixty thousand horses have therefore daily to be provided for: a larger number, probably, in proportion to its extent, than in any other European metropolis. The consumption of hay, accordingly, is enormous. In summer, whole fleets, laden with mountains of hay, come floating down the Neva; and in winter, caravans of hay sledges defile through the streets, and are drawn up in squadrons and regiments along the sides of the Sennaia Ploshchod. Some of the hay is sold wholesale by the load, but the greater part is spread out on the ground, and made up into small parcels to suit the convenience of the isvoshtshiks, from whom in return they obtain the means of providing a mouthful for themselves.

The sledges, after bringing the various commodities to market, serve their owners as stalls and counters. The matting thrown aside allows the poultry and meat to be arranged in a picturesque manner, to catch the eye of the passing stranger. The geese are cut up, and the heads, necks, legs, and carcasses sold separately, by the dozen or the half-dozen, strung ready for sale upon little cords. He whose finances will not allow him to think of luxuriating on the breast of a goose, may buy himself a little rosary of frozen heads, while one still poorer must content himself with a necklace, or a few dozens of webbed feet, to boil down into a Sunday soup for his little ones. The most singular spectacle is furnished by the frozen oxen, calves, and goats, which stand about in ghastly rows, and look like bleeding spectres come to haunt the carnivorous tyrants whose appetites have condemned the poor victims to a premature death. The petrified masses can be cut up only with hatchets and saws. Sucking pigs are a favourite delicacy with the Russians. Hundreds of the little creatures, in their frozen condition, may be seen ranged about the sledges, with their tall, motionless mothers by the side of them.

The anatomical dissections of a Russian butcher are extremely simple. Bones and meat having been all rendered equally hard by the frost, it would be difficult to attempt to separate the several joints. The animals are, accordingly, sawn up into a number of slices of an inch or two in thickness, and in the course of this operation a quantity of animal sawdust is scattered on the snow,

whence it is eagerly gathered up by poor children, of whom great numbers haunt the market. Fish, which is offered for sale in the same hard condition, is cut up in a similar way. The little diminutive *sulki* are brought to market in sacks, and rattle like so many hazel nuts when thrown into the scale. The pikes, the salmon, and the sturgeon, so pliant and supple when alive, are now as hard as though they had been cut out of marble, and so they must be kept, for a sudden thaw would spoil them, and to guard against this, they are constantly encased in ice or snow. Sometimes the whole mass freezes together, and the hatchet must then be liberally applied before the piscatory petrifications can be liberated from their icy incrustations.

So long as the frost keeps all liquid matter in captivity, and so long as the snow, constantly renewed, throws a charitable covering over all the hidden sins of the place, so long the ploshtshod looks clean enough; but this very snow and frost prepare for the coming spring a spectacle which I would counsel no one to look upon, who wishes to keep his appetite in due order for the sumptuous banquets of St. Petersburg. Every kind of filth and garbage accumulates during the winter; and when at last the melting influence of spring dissolves the charm, the quantities of sheep's eyes, fish tails, crab shells, goat's hairs, fragments of meat, pools of blood, not to speak of hay, dung, and other matters, are positively frightful. One would almost imagine that another Hercules would be required to cleanse the Augean stable; nevertheless, the purveyors to the several kitchens are not deterred by the disgusting sight, but come to wander through the crowd, and lay in a supply for their daily wants, while the peasants eat their cakes and drink their quass, unmindful of the impurities around them. Those only who have some acquaintance with the atrocious shambles of Vicuña, can have any conception of the frozen, thawed, and refrozen specimens of meat which are constantly imposed upon the public in the Sennaia Ploshtshod.

Another of the markets in which the manners of the "lower orders" of St. Petersburg may be conveniently studied is the Zimnaia Ploshtshod, at the end of the Nevskoi Prospekt, where the living cattle are disposed of, and where numbers of sledges and country waggons are constantly offered for sale to the peasants. Thousands of specimens of the Russian *telegu* may here be examined at leisure. It is a singular vehicle, and no description would convey any idea of its form and construction, without the accompaniment of some pictorial illustration. Its appearance is certainly graceful, and it may even be described as elegant, when compared to the peasant carts of many other parts of Europe. The Russian peasant's sledge is likewise a composition admirable for its lightness and its adaptation to the country.

The horses sold in this market are duly imbued with the national character. Like their masters, they are small, but active and supple; with long manes and beards, ragged hair, delicate

joints, and iron constitutions. In the stable they are dull and heavy, but in harness full of spirit, unwearied in the race, and, even after the hardest labour, tricky and playful. Cold, heat, hunger, and thirst, they endure with a patience truly admirable, and often receive their dirty straw with more apparent relish than their German brethren do the golden corn. Yet, after all, there is but little energy in the Russian horse. He knows not how to husband his force, and if unable to clear the hill at a gallop he remains hopelessly fixed in the mud. The Russian cannot be said to ill-treat his horse. He rarely flies into a rage against his animal, and expends at all times far more words than blows upon it; on the other hand, however, he bestows but little care upon it, and spoils it as little with over-cherishing as he is himself spoiled with kindness by those in whose school he has been trained and broken in. The weekly consumption of horses at St. Petersburg is calculated at about two hundred; some idea may therefore be formed of the throng and bustle that distinguish the monthly and half-yearly horse-fairs at the Zimnaïa Ploshtshod.

At the nones of December, however, the dead animals that arrive cause infinitely more bustle than the "stamping steeds" of which I have just spoken. On the 6th of December, namely, neither sooner nor later, but on the feast of St. Nicholas, it is generally assumed that the snow track must be in a firm and proper condition for the winter. Among the Russians indeed almost all actions, but particularly those which relate to their household arrangements, are regulated, not according to nature, but according to certain festivals of the Church, which are assumed to be the most suitable periods for certain arrangements to be made. Thus, for instance, the cattle are not driven out into the fields when the grass is green, but on the 17th of April, Saint Stephen's day, and then the ceremony is accompanied by the benedictions of the priest, and copious besprinklings with holy water. The farmer does not begin to plough when the weather is favourable, but on St. George's day. Apples are not plucked when they are ripe, but on the feast of Mary, in August; and an apple eaten before the legitimate day would be thought little better than poison; while after that day, even an unripe apple would be given unhesitatingly to an infant. On the Tuesday after Easter, in the south of Russia, all the tshumaks\* sally forth, because the roads then are considered to be good, and on the 1st of October (*Pakrovi*) all endeavour to be home again, as after that festival the country is no longer deemed passable.

On the 6th of December, accordingly, the snow track is thought to be in a fit condition for travelling. The autumn, with its rains, its storms, and its alternations of frost and thaw, is supposed to be at an end, and all the large caravans of sledges are put into

\* Drivers of the oxen caravans.

motion on this important day. In the second week of December, therefore, St. Petersburg, after having perhaps been but scantily supplied during the latter part of the autumn, is all at once inundated with inconceivable masses of winter stores of every kind. A scene something like that which has been described as customary at the haymarket takes place, but on an infinitely larger scale. The frozen oxen that stand about in all directions are now not to be numbered. The pigs are piled up in pyramids on the snow, and the heaps of goats rise to the altitude of mountains. The winter provision market at this time is a sight which no stranger ought to miss seeing.

We have thus passed in review the three principal markets where the Russian populace may be said chiefly to resort: let us now draw a little nearer, and examine more attentively the life and manners of the class that people them, and, after all, constitute the bulk of the nation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BLACK PEOPLE.

THE aristocracy of every country have invented some contemptuous term by which to designate the mass of their country people, whose rudeness and peculiarities it is always more easy to condemn than it is to discover and duly estimate the qualities that are really valuable. The English expression *Jeha Bull*, and the French word *canaille*, are examples of what I mean. Now the Russians, from the earliest times—for the word existed even in the days of the republic of Novgorod—have called their *canaille* *tshornoi narod*, which means literally black people; but as *tshornoi* is often used synonymously with *dirty*, the expression may be taken to mean “dirty people;” in short, “the unwashed;” and to this comprehensive class are considered to belong the peasantry, particularly when they make their appearance in the towns, the street rabble, beggars, and the common labourers. An individual belonging to the *tshornoi narod* is called a *mushik*.

The *tshornoi narod* vary in so many respects from the mob of other countries, and have so many good and bad qualities of their own, that they have furnished matter for comment and wonder to all travellers who have visited Russia during the last three centuries; and these peculiarities are the more deserving of attention, inasmuch as they are often national rather than confined to a class. There are people who believe that the lower classes in Russia are a separate and oppressed caste, without a will of their own, and without influence over their superiors; and that the civilised class floats over the mass like oil over water, neither



mingling nor sympathizing with the other. Now, this is the very reverse of the truth. There is perhaps no country in the world where all classes are so intimately connected with each other as in this vast empire, or so little divided into castes; and the same peculiarities which we notice in the bearded mushik manifest themselves with only trifling modifications among the loftiest pinnacles of that Babylonian building, the social edifice of Russia. On the haymarket of St. Petersburg we may examine the raw material out of which all Russian classes have been manufactured for centuries: and a passing glance is enough to convince us that these bearded rusty fellows are of the same race as the polished and shaven *élégants* whom we meet with in the saloons. To some extent, there exists in every country a certain affinity and family likeness between the highest and the lowest classes; but nowhere is this more the case than in Russia, because, contrary to the prevailing belief, in no country are the extremes of society brought into more frequent contact, and in few are the transitions from one class to another more frequent or more sudden. The peasant becomes a priest on the same day perhaps that an imperial mandate degrades the noble to a peasant, or to a Siberian colonist. Degradation to the ranks is a punishment frequently inflicted on Russian officers. Hereditary rank is disregarded, while public services often lead rapidly to the highest dignities. Even the *glebe adscripti* are often more nomadic in their habits, and less rooted to their soil, than our free peasants in Germany; and the spirit of speculation that pervades the whole nation is constantly making rich men poor, and poor men rich.

It requires but little polishing to convert the raw material of the mushik into a shrewd trader; and expend but a little more pains upon his training, and he will chatter away in English, French, and German. He takes the polish easily, learns without much trouble to dance and dangle, and when you look at him closely, you find him a very Proteus, who glides at will into almost every form that he chooses to assume. On the haymarket we behold the same mob that in the middle ages, at the sound of the Vetsha bell, poured into the forum of the mighty republic of Novgorod, the same mob that placed Boris Godunoff on the throne, tore from it the false Demetrius, and exalted the house of Romanoff, which rose to its present astonishing power through the mighty fermentation and development of the tshornoi narod.

The common man of St. Petersburg has precisely the same characteristics as the common man of Moscow or Odessa, or as the labourer on the confines of China. All cling with the same fidelity to the customs of their ancestors, and all remain the same in manners, education, and tastes. Their food is the same throughout the whole of the vast empire, and centuries will probably pass away before any sensible change will occur. This circumstance gives to the Russian people a unity of character,

which we should vainly look for in other countries where the manners and habits of one province often present a striking contrast to those of another.

At the first glance there is certainly something extremely repulsive in the Russian *mushik*. His hair is long and shaggy; and so is his beard: his person is dirty; he is always noisy; and when wrapped up in his sheepskin, he certainly presents a figure more suitable for a bandit or murderer than for a man devoted to peaceable occupations. This apparent rudeness, however, is less a part of the man himself than of his hair and beard, of his shaggy sheepskin, and the loud, deep tone of his voice. The stranger who is able to address him with kindness in his native language soon discovers in the *mushik* a good-humoured, friendly, harmless, and serviceable creature. "*Sdrastuitye brat!* Good day, brother; how goes it?" "*Sdrastuitye batiushka!* Good day, father; thank God, it goes well with me. What is your pleasure? How can I serve you?" And at these words his face unbends into a simpering smile, the hat is taken off, the glove drawn from the hand, bow follows bow, and he will catch your hand with native politeness and good-humoured cordiality. With admirable patience he will then afford the required information in its minutest details: and this the more willingly as he feels flattered by the interrogation, and is pleased by the opportunity to assume the office of instructor. A few words are often enough to draw from him a torrent of eloquence.

Englishmen are too apt to attribute the courtesy of the Russian to a slavish disposition; but the courteous manner in which two Russian peasants are sure to salute each other when they meet cannot be the result of fear engendered by social tyranny. On the contrary, a spirit of genuine politeness pervades all classes, the highest as well as the lowest. Foreigners generally describe the Russians as rogues, with whom it is impossible to conclude a bargain without being cheated, and no one can deny that the frauds daily practised in the market-places are innumerable. Nevertheless, examples are also numerous among them of the most romantic acts of integrity. An instance of the kind came to my own knowledge. An English lady holding an appointment in the Winter Palace gave five hundred rubles to a poor *isdavoi*\* to deliver to her daughter at Zarskoye Selo. On the following day he returned, kissed the lady's hand, and said: "Pardon me, I am guilty. I cannot tell how it has happened, but I have lost your money, and cannot find it again. Deal with me as you please." The lady, unwilling to ruin the man, made no

\* The *isdavoi*s are common *mushiks*, who act as couriers in the Imperial Palaces. They may be seen galloping about on their incage steeds in all directions in and about St. Petersburg, charged with messages of various kinds. At first they receive a few rubles monthly, as salary, but in time rise to more lucrative situations in the imperial household.

mention of his offence, and after a time lost sight of the man entirely. At the end of six years he came to her one day with a cheerful countenance, and returned the five hundred rubles of which his carelessness had deprived her. On inquiry it turned out that during those six years he had denied himself every little enjoyment, and had saved up his wages till he had collected about three hundred rubles. Having recently been promoted to a better situation, he had been in a condition to marry. His wife had brought him a dower of one hundred rubles, and was besides possessed of some articles of trifling value, all of which had been sold in order to tranquillize the husband's conscience, who now came to relieve himself of a debt that had so long weighed upon his mind. No entreaty could induce him to take the money back, which was, however, placed in a public bank, to accumulate at compound interest for the benefit of his children.

Such instances of honesty are by no means rare amongst the Russians; whether at the last day they will balance their admitted rogueries, God alone can decide. The Russian way of cheating is quite peculiar to the people, they do it with so much adroitness, one may almost say with so much grace, that it is difficult to be angry with them. If a German cheats me I cannot restrain my anger; he does it with the worst conscience in the world; he knows what he is about, has the most perfect consciousness of the shameless exorbitance of his demands, and basely abuses the confidence placed in him. The Russian, on the contrary, knows that every one takes him for a rogue, and in the vivacity of his fancy may really imagine that his wares are what he so loudly proclaims them, *самолет шизе* (the very best). Neither can he conceive why any one should object to pay four times any more than twice the value of a thing, and is therefore as unconcerned as a conjurer over his tricks. He laughs, jests, ogles his outwitted customer, and *bouâ fide* thanks God and all his saints that his work has prospered so well. One may see, when a German cheats, that he knows the devil is at his elbow; when a Russian does the same, he holds himself especially favoured by his good angel.

The case is much the same with their temperance as with their honesty. The nation is inclined to cheating from top to bottom, and yet people most pedantically honest may be found amongst them; and a hundred instances might be cited in which a Russian rogue would be more punctiliously honourable than a German Herrnhuter; the whole nation is most undeniably voluptuous and addicted to intemperance, and yet affords examples, not only of exemplary sobriety, but there are times when the most intolerable bibber amongst them will practise the severest abstinence. It is said that the Russians surpass all other nations in the consumption of brandy, and yet, strange to say, it does not seem to do them much injury. The fearful lessons given by Hogarth in his celebrated picture, "Gin Lane," are little applicable

in this country. These people who, as infants, had drams administered by their depraved mothers, reach the age of eighty and a hundred years, and are withal as fresh and healthy as if they had swallowed so much new milk: they may say of brandy what Voltaire in his eightieth year said of coffee--that it must be very slow poison. When they get any money, they are seen to swallow this unholy fire-water in incredible quantities, not sipping it out of thimble-sized glasses as we do, but out of tumblers, or, yet more unceremoniously, out of the great pewter measures in which it is handed to them. Women, girls, boys, and even sucklings (literally I mean), take a share which in other countries would have the worst consequences. Nevertheless, there are individuals to be found who have never put their lips to brandy, and others who will sometimes make a vow against drinking, and keep it for years together. As extremes meet, and are said to call forth each other, there are also individuals who, after exhibiting examples of sobriety in their persons, seem all at once attacked by a perfect frenzy of drunkenness; and for months together will be found in a situation that assimilates them to the beast. In Lesser Russia, where the brandy idol has his chief seat, and where on holidays whole villages of drunken people may be found, this strange madness has most form and substance. It would be well worth while for all who have any cognizance of the facts therewith connected to put the result of their observations together. The Russians look on this mania for drunkenness as a disease, and call it *sapoi*.

The great sums which the government draws from the monopoly of brandy, the enormous wealth of the *otkupshiks* (the brandy farmers), who invariably grow rich by their thrice shameful trade, the ruined circumstances of hundreds and thousands, are the sad testimonials of the degree in which this poisonous, flame-emitting idol rules this land, to whose altars all throng to offer up in sacrifice their own welfare, and the welfare of their families; and for whose ensnaring gifts all pine and lust with a greediness of desire, that awakens at once the deepest disgust and the strongest compassion. The poor tormented soldier knows no other means of forgetting his condition for a moment but brandy; the most fervent prayer of the beggar is for brandy; the servants and peasants thank you for brandy as for God's best gift.

In the countless booths and drinking-houses in St. Petersburg in the year 1827, brandy and other liquors were sold to the amount of eight millions of rubles. in 1833, to eight millions and a half. That gives for every inhabitant, women and children included, twenty rubles yearly for brandy, or about two and a quarter pailsful. If we exclude the children, foreigners, persons of rank, and the sick, we may form an idea of what immoderate toppers there must remain amongst the adults of the *tschornoi*

narod. The government is endeavouring to bring beer more into use, and thereby diminish the consumption of brandy. It is therefore consolatory to hear that beer is now better made and much more drunk in St. Petersburg than formerly. In 1827, the amount consumed in beer and mead was forty-two thousand rubles; in 1832, seven hundred and sixty thousand rubles. In the last four years the consumption of brandy in St. Petersburg increased in the following ratio:—100, 105, 110, 115, somewhat less than the increase of the population; the consumption of beer as 1, 3, 6, 11. The finer kinds of brandy and liquors show the greatest increase: a proof that the taste is more refined, and that the amateurs must be on the increase among the upper classes.

Melancholy as the fact is of this enormous abuse of spirituous liquors in Russia, yet, as before observed, it is certain that the evil consequences are not so glaringly offensive as they would be among any other people. It is perhaps a general law of Nature that all abuses, where they are generally prevalent, shall not be injurious in a like proportion with their strength, because all poisons carry a certain antidote with them, and human nature in its most desperate condition is yet to be saved from utter destruction. Thus despotism depraves men less in Russia than it would do in a free country, because a multitude of devices have been formed for avoiding the evil. Serfdom in Russia is not half so oppressive as it would be to men who passed from a state of freedom to one of slavery; for the people develop a great elasticity of spirit, freedom from care, and cheerfulness in the midst of their humiliation, and have found out a multitude of alleviations which a people unaccustomed to slavery would not turn to account. Any other nation in the bonds of Russian despotism and serfdom, among whom such roguery and cheating were in practice, who were fettered in such a darkness of ignorance and superstition, and so plunged in sensual excess, would be the most detestable and unbearable people on the face of the earth. The Russians, on the contrary, with all their faults and sufferings, are very tolerably agreeable, gay, and contented. Their roguery scarcely shows amiss in them, their slavery they bear with as much ease as Atlas bore the weight of the globe, and out of their brandy-casks they swallow the deepest potations even with a grace. A disease in an otherwise healthy body manifests itself by the most decisive symptoms, while in a thoroughly corrupted system the evil will glide through all parts of the body without coming to an explosion, because one evil struggles with and counteracts the other; so in Russia those manifold evils are not seen in the full light of day as in other lands. The whole is veiled by a murky atmosphere, through which the right and the wrong cannot be clearly discerned. Everything is compromised, smoothed over; no sickness is brought into a strong light, or compelled to a palpable revelation. With us the boys in the street shout after a drunken man, and pelt him with dirt and

hard names, which raises a disturbance immediately. This is never the case in Russia; and a stranger might, from the absence of drunken squabbles and noise, be led to conclude that they were a sober people, till he observed that the absence of all attention to the fact is the cause of his mistake. To his no small astonishment, he will see two, three, or four people, apparently in full possession of their reason, walking together; suddenly the whole party will reel and stagger, and one or the other measure his length in the mire, where he lies unnoticed, unless by his brother or a police-officer.

•Our German drunkards are coarse, noisy, and obtrusive; intoxication makes an Italian or a Spaniard gloomy and revengeful, and an Englishman brutal; but the Russian, the more the pity, in the highest degree humorous and cheerful: the more the pity, I say, because, if the consequences of the evil showed themselves more offensively, the evil itself would be more energetically combated. In the first stage of drunkenness the Russians begin to gossip and tell stories, sing, and fall into each other's arms; at a more advanced stage even enemies embrace, abjuring all hostility amidst a thousand protestations of eternal friendship; then all strangers present are most cordially greeted, kissed, and caressed, let them be of what age or rank they may. It is all "little father," "little mother," "little brother," "little grandmother;" and if their friendliness be not returned with a like warmth, then it is "Ah! little father, you are not angry that we are tipsy? Ah! it's very true; we're all tipsy together. Ah! it is abominable. Pray forgive us—punish us—beat us." Then ensue new caresses; they embrace your knees, kiss your feet, and entreat you to forgive their obtrusiveness. Other nations, whose whole moral strength lies in their cultivated reason, show themselves dangerous when the abuse of spirituous liquors frees their passions from this restraint. But the Russian, whose reason is little cultivated, and who, when he is good, is so from innate kindliness of feeling, cannot be so degraded by drink. He shows himself what he is—a child much in want of guidance. It is curious enough, however, that even in drunkenness a Russian's native cunning never forsakes him; it is very difficult to move him, be he ever so drunk, to any baseness not to his advantage. The deeper a Russian drinks, the more does the whole world appear to him *couleur de rose*, till at last his raptures break forth in a stream of song; and, stretched upon his sledge, talking to himself and all good spirits, he returns at length to his own home, whither his wiser horse has found his way unguided.

The inferiority of the Russians to the West Europeans is freely admitted by them. If their productions are found fault with, they will often say in excuse, "Ah, sir! it's only Russian work. I made it myself; how should it be better? The Germans, we know, understand everything better." "Prostaya rabota" (common work) is not only an expression in use among foreigners

for Russian work, but one heard frequently from the natives themselves. I once asked a dealer in toys and baskets where he got his wares. "The toys," said he, "are German work, the baskets common" (*i.e.* Russian). The Russian word for common (*prostoi*) is regularly adopted by the German-Russians in this sense. In speaking apologetically to a friend they will say, "You will find nothing very elegant in my household arrangements; it is all very *prostoi*." "We are great rogues," the Russians will often add; "each tries to outwit the other as much as he can; and I must tell you frankly to be on your guard with me." They make the frankest revelations with respect to themselves, so that one feels inclined to hold them free from fault, even while they are confessing that they share the failings of their country. "Ah! we Russians are indolent; we cheat wherever we can; our priests permit the most outrageous roguery to go unreprieved; our people in authority are the most corrupt in the world; we are only active when there is money to be gained; nobler objects, knowledge and science, have no attractions for us, though we may be forced to attain them. We do nothing well or thoroughly, and are sunk in unequalled sensuality."

This very openness it is that so often misleads a stranger; he knows not what to think of them. "What is the price of those plums?" "Two rubles, sir; they are excellent, real French." "Ah! you Russian rogue, they French!" "Yes, yes, I say real French. Of course, as I am a Russian, it must be a lie. Oh! the Russians are rogues, sir; that all the world knows. The French and Germans never cheat; they are all honest people, and have only good things. Well, I advise you not to buy my plums. I say they are French, but they are no such thing. See, we Russians lie and cheat wherever we can; we have no conscience at all, and, as the Poles say, 'He must be a cunning fellow who outwits a Russian.' And the Poles are right, sir. Do buy something of me, sir, and I will wager what you like you don't go uncheated out of my shop. Ha, ha! ha, ha! the Russian rogues! He who is not cheated by a Russian must be a cunning fellow."

Confessions of this kind are so often heard, that it is impossible to help wishing they were somewhat less willing to admit their weaknesses, and less ready to content themselves, as they generally do, with the expression "*Shto sdelatj?*" (what's to be done?). Nothing is easier than to make a Russian confess, and nothing is more common than for him to repeat his offence after having confessed, and been punished or pardoned for similar ones a dozen times. As they have immeasurably more cunning than understanding, are far more clever than rational, their own proverb, "*Sum sa rashum sasholl*" (his wits have run away with his reason), is quite true; a correct psychological glance into their own inward man has revealed to them how often exaggerated cunning and calculation have led them to most irrational practices.

It is honourable to us Germans, that the Russians (that is, the lower classes) have so much confidence in us: would to heaven every German justified this confidence, and did not, as unhappily many of them in Russia do, profit by the credit of the national character, and sin at the expense of thirty millions of his forefathers and fellow-countrymen! A Russian of rank will entrust a German with his secrets, or his valuables, much more readily than his own countryman. The *isvoshtshik* will not willingly let a Russian go without having paid, or without leaving a pledge, while he will readily give a German credit.

The Russian of distinction makes as much difference between his own countrymen and the Germans as the lower classes do. "Slush! tui!" (hark thee!) says a Russian nobleman to a Russian tailor—everybody who is neither a nobleman nor foreigner is thou'd in Russia, even the wealthy merchant—"padi sudi" (come here), measure me for a coat, velvet collar, bright buttons, long in the waist; dost understand? let it be ready the day after tomorrow, dost hear?" "Slushi" (I hear and obey); "Stupai" (be off then). "My dear Mr. Meyer," he will say to an *innostranets* (foreigner), "excuse me that I have given you the trouble to come; pray be seated. I want a new coat: would you advise green or blue? Pray make it in the newest fashion, and, if possible, I should like to have it in a fortnight. I know how much you have to do. If it cannot, I will wait three weeks. I am much obliged to you. And how go affairs with you, *Gospodin Meyer*? how do you get on with Prince R.? If I can be of any service to you in that business, let me know. If possible, you will let me have the coat before the three weeks, will you not? Adieu!"

A foreign workman is paid what he asks without hesitation, even if he ask sixty rubles for the mere cutting out of a coat. With the Russian mechanic it is, "What! twenty rubles for such a trifle as that! Twenty strokes with a cudgel from the police! There's ten for thee, and quite enough: take it." "Slushu" (I obey), answers the poor overborne rogue, makes a bow, and goes away quite content.

The Russians are sometimes called the French of the North; as lame a comparison, if seriously meant, as that of modern Moscow with old Rome. The differences between the two nations are endless. Something of likeness there is, however, in the fact that in the demeanour of the lowest Russian there is a certain adroitness, a *savoir faire* and *tourneur*, altogether wanting to the Germans. Look at the cut of the commonest national garment, and in spite of dirt and coarseness, there will be a something *comme il faut* about it. Even under the bearskins, slender and rounded forms may be perceived. The awkward and ridiculous vestments occasionally seen among us are unknown here: to judge by his clothing, a Russian must be one of the most elegant and rational of men. Observe a couple of Russians



of the lowest class: if they have a heavy burden to transport, how cleverly and readily it is done, in spite of the most deplorable means of carriage! In St. Petersburg, the most ordinary peasants, picked up quite at random, will be charged with the transport of the costliest and most fragile articles: for example, immense looking-glasses, porcelain, &c.; and will execute the commission with as much dexterity as if it had been their employment from childhood. I should like to see one quantity of glass packed and carried by German peasants, and another by Russians, and strike the balance between the relative skill and address of the two nations, according to the quantity of merchandise demolished.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CHURCHES.

MADAME DE STAEL, when she beheld Moscow from the elevation of the Kremlin, turned to her companions, and exclaimed, "*Voilà Rome Tutare!*" The Russians themselves like to compare their city to that world-subduer of antiquity; and many as are the peculiarities that distinguish the one from the other, it is not to be denied that there are points wherein they assimilate, and among them is that of extreme toleration in the matter of religion. With whatever tenacity the Russians, like the Romans, may cling to the religion of their forefathers, they yet willingly admit other gods by the side of their own; and either because they think, like the Romans, that it can do no harm to reverence other invisible powers, or because, to give the matter a more Christian-like expression, as they well say, "*Vso edin Bog*" (there is one God over all), they will even bow down as reverentially in foreign churches as in their own.

The capital of the Russians contains places of worship for all confessions. In the finest street in St. Petersburg, the Nevskoi Prospekt, there are Armenian, Greek, Protestant, Roman Catholic, United and Disunited, Sunnite and Schiite places of prayer in most familiar neighbourhood; and the street has, therefore, not inaptly received the *soubriquet* of Toleration-street.

St. Petersburg, like Berlin, is a child of our days: a birth that first saw the light under the sun of a philosophical age. In opposition to Moscow, as Berlin in opposition to Vienna, St. Petersburg has neither so many nor such distinguished churches as Moscow, although the major part are built in a pleasing and tasteful style: in the modern Russian, which is a mixture of the Grecian, Byzantine, old Russian, and new European architecture; the Byzantine, which was brought from Constantinople with

Christianity, being the most prominent. A building in the form of a cross; in the midst a large cupola, and at the four ends four small narrow-pointed cupolas, the points surmounted by crosses; a grand entrance adorned with many columns, and three side entrances without columns: such is the exterior form of the greater part of the Russian churches, including the thirty churches of St. Petersburg; about one-tenth of the number dispersed through the streets of Moscow the Holy. In the former, the interiors are lighter, brighter, more simple, more elegant; in the latter, more overloaded with ornament, darker, more varied in colour, more grotesque. The handsomest church in St. Petersburg is Isaac's Church. The exterior is finished. It wants only the last decoration for the interior: the trophies and the pictures of saints. This church stands in the largest and most open place in the city, in the midst of its finest buildings and monuments: the Winter Palace, the Admiralty, the War-office, Alexander's pillar, and the rock of Peter the Great; and will, when it has laid aside its mantle of scaffolding, show itself worthy of such neighbours. On the spot where it stands, they have been at work upon a place of worship for the last century. A wooden church was followed by a church of brick; a church of marble was then attempted, which failed, and was finished in brick. This half-and-half building vanished in its turn; and, under Nicholas the First, the present magnificent building was erected, which will scarcely find so splendid a successor. It is entirely composed of granite blocks and polished marble. To make a firm foundation, a whole forest of piles was sunk in the swampy soil. From the level of the upper part of Peter's-place rise three broad flights of steps, which separately served the fabulous giants of the Finnish mythology for seats. They are formed from masses of granite rock brought from Finland. These steps lead from the four sides of the building to the four chief entrances, each of which has a superb peristyle. The pillars of these peristyles are sixty feet high, and have a diameter of seven feet: all magnificent granite monoliths from Finland, buried for centuries in its swamps, till brought to light by the triumphant power of Russia, and rounded, polished, and erected as caryatides, to the honour of God, in his temple. The pillars are crowned with capitals of bronze, and support the enormous beam of a frieze formed of six fire-polished blocks. Over the peristyles, and at twice their height, rises the chief and central cupola, higher than it is wide, in the Byzantine proportion. It is supported also by thirty pillars of smooth polished granite, which, although gigantic in themselves, look small compared to those below. The cupola is covered with copper overlaid with gold, and glitters like the sun over a mountain. From its centre rises a small elegant rotundo, a miniature repetition of the whole, looking like a chapel on a mountain-top. The whole edifice is surrounded by the crowning and far-seen golden cross. Four

smaller cupolas, resembling the greater in every particular, stand around, like children round a mother, and complete the harmony visible in every part. The walls of the church are to be covered with marble; and no doubt Isaac's Church will be the most remarkable building in St. Petersburg, and supersede the Kasan Church of the Virgin for great state festivals. This Kasan Church, which stands on the Perspective, is a monument of the so often failing spirit of imitation in Russia. The Russians wish to unite in their capital all that is grand or beautiful in the whole civilised world. This church is meant for a copy of St. Peter's at Rome, and unbearable as a copy, is moreover not a good copy. The puny effort is almost comic in its contrast to the mighty work of Buonarrotti. It is fortunate that it lies so far from its original: after the many lands he must pass through to reach it, the foreign spectator may have forgotten the impression of the southern prototype, and hence find the northern copy endurable. As in Rome, a portico of pillars leads from either side in a semicircle to the two entrances of the church; but the pillars are small, and what in Rome seemed necessary and suitable to circumstances is here a superfluous and incomprehensible appendage. The doors are of bronze, covered with a multitude of worthless bas-reliefs. In great niches along the side of the church stand colossal statues of the Grand Dukes Vladimir and Alexander Nevsky, of St. John and St. Andrew. In the interior, which is little suited to the wants of divine service, as performed in Russia, they were obliged to place the high altar, not opposite the chief entrance, but very awkwardly at the side. All is dark and straitened; and one cannot help pitying the fifty-six monoliths, the mighty giants who support the little roof, and lamenting that their prodigious strength is not employed in a labour more worthy of them.

Apart from these architectural discords, the church is not wanting in interest. First of all, the greedy eye is attracted by the silver of the ikonostases (the pictorial wall of the sanctuary). The balustrades, doors, and door-ways of the ikonostases are generally of wood, carved and gilded, but in this church all its beams and posts are of massive silver. The pillars of the balustrade round the holy place, the posts of the three doors, the arches twenty feet in height above the altar, and the frames of the pictures, are of fine silver. The silver beams are all highly polished, and reflect with dazzling brilliancy the light of the thousand tapers that burn before them. I could not learn how many hundred weight of silver were employed; but, doubtless, many thousands of dozens of French and German spoons, and hundreds of soup-tureens and teapots, must have been melted down to furnish the material; for it was the Cossacks, laden with no inconsiderable booty from the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, who made an offering of this mass of silver to the Holy Mother of Kasan, for the object to which it is now appropriated. They seem to have a peculiar veneration for this Madonna, who is half

their countrywoman; for John Vassielevitsh brought her from Kasan to Moscow, whence Peter the Great transported her to St. Petersburg. Her picture, set with pearls and precious stones, hangs in the church. It was before this picture that Kutusoff prayed before he advanced to meet the enemy in 1812, for which reason she is considered to be closely connected with that campaign.

All the St. Petersburg churches are already adorned with trophies gained from various nations of Europe and Asia, particularly the Kasan Church, the cathedral of the metropolitan: they are hung up on the pillars and in the corners of the church; keys of German and French towns, marshals' batons from French generals, and a number of standards from Turks and Persians. The Persian flags are easily known by a silver band as large as life fastened to the end. The Turkish flags, surmounted by the crescent, are merely large, handsome, unsoiled pieces of cloth, mostly red, and so new and spotless that they might be sold again to the merchant by the ell. It looks as if both Turks and Persians had handed their flags over to the Russians out of politeness, and without striking a blow. The French colours which hang near them offer a sad but most honourable contrast. They are rent to pieces, and to many of the eagles only a single dusty fragment is attached. Of some, the Russians have only carried off the flag-staff, perhaps because the French ensign had swallowed the last rag, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. How many unknown deeds of heroism may not those flags have witnessed! Those eagles with their expanded wings, with which they vainly sought to cover the whole empire, look strangely enough in the places they now roost in.

Amongst the field-m Marshals' batons is that of the Prince of Eckinuhl; and among the keys suspended to all the pillars are those of the cities of Hamburg, Leipsic, Dresden, Rheims, Breda, Utrecht, and many other German, French, and Netherlands cities, before whose gates a Russian trumpet has once been blown.

After the Church of Kasan, that of Peter and Paul, in the fortress, is the most interesting. It was built by an Italian architect, under Peter the Great, and stands nearly in the middle of the city, opposite the Winter Palace. Its pointed slender tower, exactly resembling that of the Admiralty, rises like a mast three hundred and forty feet in height; for the last one hundred and fifty feet the tower is so small and thin that it must be climbed like a pine-tree. On one occasion, when the metal angel on the top wanted some repairs, an adventurous workman reached the summit thus: from the last gallery of the tower he knocked in a hook as high as he could reach from a ladder, threw a rope over it, and dragged himself up by it; he then knocked in a second hook, which he also mounted by means of his rope, and so reached the top. On the gilding of this slender tower, which is seen

from all parts of St. Petersburg, like a golden needle hovering in the air, particularly when, as is frequently the case, the lower part is veiled in fog, ten thousand ducats have already been lavished.

The Peter-Paul Church in St. Petersburg is a kind of sequel to the Arkhangel'skoi Sabor in Moscow: the one continues the register of the deceased rulers of Russia from where the other leaves off. In Moscow are interred the Russian czars down to Peter the Great; he, and those that succeeded him, in the Peter-Paul Church. Whoever has seen the monuments of the Polish kings at Cracow, or those of the French and English kings and Italian princes, will wonder at the simplicity and absence of ornament in this last resting-place of the Russian emperors, particularly when he thinks of the splendour of the Winter Palace. The simple coffins are placed in the vaults, and over them in the church is nothing further, in the shape of a monument, than a stone coffin-shaped sarcophagus, covered with a red pall. On the pall the name of the deceased emperor or emperor's son is embroidered in golden letters, quite simply, as "His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Constantine;" "His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Peter the First," &c. In some there are nothing but the initial letters, and here and there some unimportant trophy. On the sarcophagus of the Grand Duke Constantine lie merely the keys of some Polish fortresses. Peter the Third, to whom Catherine, in her lifetime, refused this place, rests there now. Paul placed both Catherine and his father there. A hundred cannon, impregnable bastions, and a garrison of three thousand men defend the place, which can be desecrated by hostile hands only when all St. Petersburg lies in ruins. The Russian princes are the only ones in Europe, as far as I know, who are buried within the walls of a fortress.

Around the sarcophagi, on the pillars, and in the corners, flags and other trophies are suspended as in the Kasan Church. Those of Persia and Turkey are particularly numerous. They lie here as in a museum; batons of Turkish commanders and grand viziers, generally made of brass or silver, beautifully wrought, something like the small battle-axes in use in the middle ages; the triple horse-tails of the pachas, many insignia of the Janizaries, and a collection of most singularly-formed keys of Turkish and Persian fortresses. All the Persian flags have the outstretched silver hand at their extremities. The flag itself is an excessively long triangular piece of double silk stuff trimmed with lace, having in the middle a panther, over whose back radiates the broad disc of a sun. They are all in as good condition as the Turkish; in one or two a ball has passed through the sun, and on one only can be traced five bloody finger-marks of the Turkish standard-bearer who died defending it. Three hundred of these Persian suns and Turkish crescents bend here before the cross of the Christians.

Among the sacred vessels we were shown some turned in wood and ivory, the work of Peter the Great. It is incomprehensible how this unwearied man could govern a great empire in all its details, establish manufactures, build cities, dig canals, organize an army, a fleet, a host of public offices, found schools, academies, universities, theatres, and withal find time to make these crosses, candelabra, and cups of ebony and ivory, and so to finish and polish every minute part, that any German guild would have pronounced it a masterpiece. To show with what extreme art these productions are finished, we may mention that the centre of one of these crosses is ornamented with a circular slide of ivory, on which the crucifixion, with the mourning women below, is carved in bas-relief. A multitude of rays issue from this slide as from a sun: every ray is turned in ebony, in the ornamenting of which with all manner of carving, an enormous degree of labour must have been expended. It is impossible to withhold our astonishment at this gifted and enthroned Proteus; and he who stands by his grave, be he who he may, will wish peace to his ashes, and blessing and prosperity to all the good that has proceeded from him. Great God! who would not wish that Peter could, from his tomb, cast one glance upon the flourishing city that, with such unspeakable toil and difficulty, he founded amidst the swamps of the Neva? But life is so short that a man can rarely enjoy the fruits of what he has discovered, planted, or created. Perhaps Peter's prophetic spirit foresaw what here would be; yet here, if ever, the reality must have surpassed all expectation.

Among the Greek-Russian churches, that of the Smolnoi convent is distinguished for the taste of its decorations. It was finished about a year ago, and may serve strangers as a specimen of the modern Russian style of church architecture. It is more spacious than Russian churches are in general, and its five cupolas are placed in harmonious relation with one another. They are painted deep blue, sprinkled with golden stars. A high, magnificent, beautifully-designed iron grating—whose rails, or rather pillars, are wound with wreaths of vine-leaves and flowers, in iron-work—surrounds the court-yards of the convent; and above it wave the elegant birch and lime trees. Seated on a gentle elevation on a corner of land, round which the Neva bends to the west, this cloister, with its mysterious reserve, and the alluring colours with which it is clothed, resembles a magic palace of the Arabian Nights. From the eastern suburb of St. Petersburg, and from Sunday-street, which is two versts long, and leads directly to it, the cloister is seen far and near; and from all quarters of the world the orthodox believers bow and cross themselves at the sight of its cupolas. This building is dedicated to the education and instruction of young girls of noble and citizen birth, of whom not fewer than five hundred are brought up at the cost of the government, and three hundred at their

own. The church of the cloister, which is open to the public as a place of worship, has something extremely pleasing in its style of decoration; only two colours are to be seen, that of the gold framework of the ornamental objects, and of the white imitative marble, highly polished, and covering all the walls, pillars, and arches. Several galleries, which are illuminated on high festival-days, run like garlands round the interior of the dome. Not fewer than four-and-twenty stoves of gigantic dimensions are scattered about the church, which they keep at the temperature of the study, and greet all that enter, with true Christian warmth. These stoves are built like little chapels, so that at first they are taken for church ornaments. The Russian love pomp and splendour in their churches: in this, the balustrades surrounding the ikonostas are of the finest glass; the doors are formed of golden columns twined and interlaced with vine leaves and ears of corn in carved and gilded wood. The pictures of this ikonostas are all new, painted by the pupils of the St. Petersburg Academy. The faces of the apostles and saints, of the Madonna and of the Redeemer, in the old Russian pictures, have all the well-known Byzantine or Indian physiognomy on the handkerchief of St. Veronica in Boissière's collection, small, thin-cut eyes, dark complexion, excessively thin cheeks, a small mouth, thin lips, slender ringlets, and a scanty beard; the nose uncommonly sharp and pointed, quite vanishing at the root between the eyes, and the head very round. In the new pictures of the Russian school, they have copied the national physiognomy as seen in the Russian merchants; full red cheeks, a long beard, light and abundant hair, large blue eyes, and a blunted nose. It is wonderful that the Russian clergy have permitted this deviation from the old models; the new ones, however, are held in very little respect by the people, who reverence only the old dusty and dusky saints, and are as little inclined to accept faces they can understand, as to hear divine service in a language they can comprehend; for the old Slavonian dialect, which continues to be used, is unintelligible to them. The Empress Maria, the foundress and benefactress of the convent, has a simple monument in the church, which is dedicated in her honour to St. Mary.

There are only two convents in St. Petersburg: this of Smolnoi—one only in name, for the Empress Catherine's twenty nuns have long since been dispossessed by the eight hundred young ladies—and that of St. Alexander Nevsky, for monks. The latter is one of the most celebrated in Russia, a *Lavra*,\* and inferior in rank only to the "Lavra of the Trinity" in Moscow, and to the Lavra of the Cave in Kiev. Its proper name is Alexander Nevskaya Svätroïtroïtzkaya Lavra (the Alexander Nevsky Sacred Trinity Lavra). It is the seat of the Metropolitan of St. Peters-

\* The holiest convents in the empire, the seats of the Metropolitans, are called *Lavras*; the other convents are only monastirs.

burg, and stands at the extreme end of the Nevskoi Prospekt, where it occupies a large space, enclosing within its walls churches, towers, gardens, and monks' cells. Peter the Great founded it in honour of the canonized Grand Duke Alexander, who in a great battle here defeated the Swedes and knights of the military orders, and whose remains were brought hither in a silver coffin. Peter's successors increased the possessions and buildings of the cloister, and Catherine built its cathedral, one of the handsomest churches in St. Petersburg. For the interior decoration, marble was brought from Italy, precious stones from Siberia, and pearls from Persia; it is further adorned with some good copies after Guido Reni and Perugino; the altar-piece, the Annunciation of the Virgin, is by Raffaele Mengs, or, as the monk our guide assured us, by "Arphaële" (Raffaële) himself. In one of the chapels are some pictures by "Robinsa," that is, not Robinson, but Rubens. "*On Italiensky*" (he was an Italian), as our worthy Father added in explanation. Pictures by foreign masters are otherwise something unheard of in a Russian church. From Robinson to the Cannibals is no great leap, and therefore we were the less frightened when our guide, pointing to a corner of the church, said, "There lies a Cannibal." We read the inscription: it was the well-known Russian general, Hannibal. The Russians, who have no H, change that letter almost always into K.

On two great pillars opposite the altar are two excellent portraits, Peter the Great and Catherine the Second, larger than life. These two, as "Founder" and "Finisher," are everywhere united in St. Petersburg, like man and wife. What might have been the result had they been really so? Would he have driven her out as he did his sister Sophia? or she him, as she did her husband Peter the Third? or would Russia have gained doubly by the union? In a side-chapel stands the monument of Alexander Nevsky. It is of massive silver, and contains not less than five thousand pounds of pure metal; it is a silver mountain fifteen feet high, on which stand a silver catafalco, and silver angels as big as a man, with trumpets, and silver flowers, and a number of bas-reliefs in silver, representing the Battle of the Neva. We lighted up two wax tapers at his grave, and were pleased to see how calmly they glimmered in his honour. This kindling of lamps and tapers in Russian churches is a pretty custom; the little flame is so living a symbol of the continued life of the soul, and, beyond all other material things, flame is the best representation of the spiritual. The Russians have so closely adopted this idea, that there is no interment, no baptism, no betrothing—in short, no sacred ceremony—without torch, lamp, or taper, to be thought of; fire is for them the pledge of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and hence illuminations play the most important part in their church ceremonies.

The Sergieff convent, between St. Petersburg and Peterhof, contains little that is remarkable, unless we reckon as such its



archimandrite, who is a young and handsome man, and was formerly an officer in the army. The Preobrashensky Church belongs to one of the oldest regiments of guards, founded by Peter the Great, the tenth legion of the Russian Cæsars. This church, the "Spass-Preobrashenskoi-Sabor," is one of the most considerable of the city, and more than any other adorned, both without and within, with trophies from conquered nations. The railing that surrounds the churchyard is formed of Turkish and French cannon. Every three of those three hundred cannon, one large and two smaller, mounted on a granite pedestal, with their mouths pointed downwards, form a column. Around the cannon, chains of different thicknesses, gracefully twined, are hung like garlands between the columns; on the summit of each is enthroned a Russian double eagle of iron, with expanded wings. Within, the church is adorned with flags and halberds; the pillars look like palm-trees, of which every leaf is a lance. Here also travellers are shown a production of Russian inventive talent, the work of a common peasant. It is a large, splendid piece of clock-work, made by him in his native village, bought for twenty thousand rubles by his lord, and presented to the church. The works are said to be so good as to have stood in need of repair during the six years the clock has been in the church.

Trinity Church is also a modern erection, like the Smolnoi convent, and very similar to it. The exterior offers an example of the very fantastic manner in which the Russians decorate their churches. Under the cornice of the dark-blue carved cupola, an arabesque of vine leaves and flowers runs all round. The garlands are held up by angels, and between every pair of them a crown of thorns is introduced as a centre. But for this martyr-token of Christianity, we might fancy the gay temple of some Grecian god before us.

The half, and certainly the more important half, of the churches of St. Petersburg are the erections of the present century. The Nicolai Church, the Church of the Resurrection, and some others of the time of Catherine, are not worth mention in an architectural point of view. In the Church of the Resurrection I saw some very singular offerings to the saints; among others a patch-work quilt, probably the offering of some devout beggar, and containing the best of her rags. It was made out of a vast number of pieces great and small, woollen, linen, and silk, worked with gold thread, perhaps taken from the cast-off epauletts of some officer of the guards, and in the middle a golden cross was sewed on. In the Nicolai Church, which is built in two stories, one for divine service during winter, and the other in summer, I found the four small cupolas tenanted by a number of pigeons, which had made their nests there, and were fed by the attendants with the rice which the pious placed there for the dead. I entered the church at the same time with a splendidly-attired merchant's wife, who had just stepped out of her carriage,

and called out to her French companion, "*Attendez un moment, je veux faire mes prières.*" She went to all the saints' pictures one after the other, made her reverence, ogling them most graciously, and then danced out again with a well-pleased motion of the head, and drove to another church. Among the churches of other confessions, that built by Paul, when he assumed the protectorship of the Maltese Order, is at least interesting. It is quite in the style of the old churches of the Knights of St. John, and still contains the chair on which the emperor sat as grand-master of the order.

The largest Catholic church is on the Prospekt, opposite the Kasan Church. The priests are Germans, and the service half German, half Latin. It is attended by the Poles and Lithuanians, to whom the chanting, by the congregation, of the "Immaculate Virgin," "the Queen of Heaven," "the Tower of God," "the Fortress of Zion," in itself sufficiently unintelligible, must be necessarily still more so here. The Russians rarely attend the Catholic service, if they go to any foreign church it is generally the Protestant. The Catholics, Greeks, and Armenians (the latter have also a very pretty church on the Prospekt) hold to the doctrine of the Trinity, but the Dutch, as it appears, to a Duality; for on their church stands the singular inscription, "*Inc. et Salvatoris verbum.*" This church, with its very rich domain, dates from Peter the Great, when the Dutch were the most considerable merchants, and were endowed by the liberal czar with so much land within the city, that many a Dutch cathedral may envy the church of this little northern colony.

The English are the only foreigners in St. Petersburg who keep exclusively to their own community, and form a kind of state within a state, or at least endeavour to do so. On their church on the Neva is inscribed, "Chapel of the English Factory," and the same is stamped on all their prayer-books. This factory is not one of the least interesting of all the settlements that this remarkable nation has scattered over the whole globe. Though small in numbers (there are about eight hundred souls), it is extremely rich, and in credit, power, and opulence, perhaps as important as a settlement of twenty thousand individuals of any other nation. Many English have entered the Russian service, and seem to do extremely well in it. When I visited their church I counted twenty Russian epaulets on young English officers. "Farther, farther," said a voice behind me, as I stood in the entrance, looking over the little congregation and estimating their numbers. It was an elegant, but grave and severe-looking gentleman, who directed my attention to the regulations suspended from a pillar, which forbade standing in the passages, and then gave me a seat. On one occasion, when the Emperor Nicholas visited this church, and stood still at the entrance, he also was addressed with the "Farther, farther, your majesty," and shown to a seat. Extreme quiet, which is not the least important part

of public worship, and is certainly more conducive to devotion than singing or any other exercise, reigned over the whole assembly. But it was not, all alike pleasing or edifying. The English episcopal service is certainly susceptible of much reformation and improvement. The very monotonous, though not displeasing singing (they never make such an outcry as in many German congregations), occupies the greater part of the time. The sermon is short, the manner of delivering it without eloquence or fervour. The St. Petersburg preacher, moreover, propped his head sometimes on his right, sometimes on his left hand, and sometimes on both together, which would have looked indecorous in a coffee-house, but in the pulpit, and from a preacher, was in the highest degree improper and offensive. The English clerk, who sits under the pulpit, constantly repeats certain words of the preacher in such a journeyman-like fashion, and in so nasal and trumpeting a tone, that it is really difficult to keep properly in view the gravity of the occasion, and not to be unduly excited by the very comic effect. It is strange also, and beneath the dignity of the preacher, to leave his seat so often during the prayers, and appear now here and now there, now at the altar, and now in his desk.

There are several German Lutheran churches in St. Petersburg; but they would not be sufficient to contain the forty thousand German Protestants there settled, if they were as zealous church-goers there as in their native land. The Church of St. Anne is the most important; the preachers appear much too fine in the pulpit, covered as they are with orders, whose gay colours form a glaring contrast with their black gowns. There is also a great deal of luxury and ostentation among the German congregations. One day I found St. Anne's Church all hung with black, the pulpit decked with crape; before the altar several tapers were burning as in the Greek churches, and in the midst was placed a coffin covered with silver, and before the door, carriages, some with two, some with four horses, and a whole chorus of black muffled torch-bearers. In great astonishment I asked what German prince had died here. "It is the confectioner K——, of Vassili Ostrof," was the answer! We forgive luxury and ostentation in princes and nobles much more readily than in upstarts and mechanics; because, to those born in the purple, it comes as something of course; they fancy it cannot be otherwise. But the others have a bad conscience in their proceedings, hide it but indifferently, and may be said to invade the rights of the public.

In a foreign land, even the most insignificant appearance has an interest; and if we bestow little attention on a fruit-tree in a garden, we examine it more closely by a hermitage, or in a wilderness. Such a fruit-tree is the small brotherhood of Herrnhuters in St. Petersburg. Their small adorned house of prayer is at the end of Isaac's-street, and is entered through a light, cheerful court. There are very few of them; not more than fifty

brothers, it is said, form the centre of this congregation; but the reputation of their piety and of the eloquence of their preachers has spread so far, that on every holiday many persons assemble here, high and low, Germans, Russians, Poles, and French. The church is always so full that the people press up to the open windows to take part in the service, and the pastor opens the doors of his adjoining apartments to find places for the congregation.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SERVANTS OF ST. PETERSBURG.

FROM very ancient times the Russian nobles have divided their serfs into two classes: the agricultural peasants, who live on the estates and cultivate the soil, and the so-called "dvorniyé ljudi," who are chosen for the personal service of the lord, as footmen, gardeners, coachmen, and others. These servants soon obtained certain advantages, were not used to dig the soil, and not given up for military service. As they were no better fed in their lord's house than in their own, had their own bread and quass to provide, to be content with what remained from their lord's table, and as they had rarely any other clothing than that worn on the paternal dunghill, such servants cost very little to keep; and whole companies of stable-boys, stove-heaters, scullions, lamp-lighters, couriers, table-coverers, and housemaids, were easily admitted into a household. These thorough old Russian servants, who, with their shoes of lime-bark and sheepskin cloaks, formed a strange contrast to the palaces they lived in, where they slept on the stoves in the kitchen, or on the chairs and floors of the rooms, are still to be met with in country-houses in the interior. Even in many houses in Moscow and St. Petersburg (generally in those of the poorer nobles), the lower offices of the household are still filled by these serf servants, who are provided perhaps with a better caftan and boots, but after serving for a time in the kitchen or the stable, are dismissed to their fields again. These people differ too little from the rest of the peasants to form a class apart.

The observation which the masters soon made, that their own serfs were much idler, slower, and more perverse in service than those who worked for hire, the increasing wants of a newly-civilized capital, and of luxury growing with the growth of the empire, have called forth a numerous class of ministering spirits, consisting of natives of all nations, and of the most various relations in life, the study of which is one of the most interesting that a capital can offer to the ethnograph or psychologist.\* By

\* According to the statistical returns, there are not fewer than 85,000 of such attendant spirits in St. Petersburg.

far the larger part are those members of the superfluous population of the estates who are not wanted for the cultivation of the soil, and whom their lords have permitted to seek their fortune in the towns. They are furnished with a pass or permit, which runs thus: "I permit my krepostnoi tshelovek (serf) Jephim, on payment of a yearly sum of sixty, seventy, eighty rubles) as the case may be), which he is to transmit half-yearly, to seek his livelihood in any way, in any town or village of the Russian empire, for so many years, until it be my pleasure to call him back to my estate, X., where he is registered." The serfs, thus manumitted for a time, come to the cities and engage in various occupations, in hotels, coffee-houses, manufactories, and in wealthy private families, where, however, those entirely free are preferred, on account of the dependence of the former on another master, by whom they are continually liable to be recalled. It is curious to see with what inconceivable adroitness and rapidity these people from the plough accommodate themselves to their new position. They come up raw and unfashioned from the sheepfold, stumble over the floors of the sitting-rooms, and scarcely know how to place a table against the wall. In a few months they are coxcombs in gay liveries, exhaling perfume, dancing on the smoothest polished floor with the waiting-maids, and assisting their masters into their carriages with the grace of a court page.

An immense number of servants are recruited from the army. These poor fellows, when they are dismissed after their twenty or twenty-five years' service, have commonly forgotten during that time any mechanical art whereby they might live, have lost their relations by death, and their former masters by having served as soldiers, for the emperor's service sets them free from all other. On the other hand, as dentshuks (servants) to so many officers, they have learned to obey to admiration, and therefore naturally seek employment to attend on single gentlemen, or as porters, messengers, or watchmen in public institutions. For the latter purpose, they are generally preferred to all others, for which reason they are met with in numbers at all hospitals, poor-houses, theatres, at the exchanges, and in the schools as door-keepers, waiters, &c. in their old worn uniforms, and a whole series of medals and crosses on their breasts. If any master desire a being who has absolutely no will of his own, who is ready to devote all his powers of mind and body to his service, who is yielding, submissive, and patient enough to bear all his whims and humours, even his anger and injustice, without a murmur; in a word, if any one wish for the very ideal of a servant, who will bear his master, as it were, upon his hands, go through fire and water for him without complaint, who neither sleeps nor wakes without permission, nor eats nor drinks but at command, who makes no other answer, and has no other thought, on the receipt of any possible order or commission, but "slushu" (I obey), let him at once engage a Russian dentshuk, who, after he has

endured the fiery ordeal of twenty years' service as a Russian soldier, and learnt suppleness by countless punishments, will find the hardest place mild and easy. It is not possible that one who loves to rule could find a softer cushion whereon to lean than such a dentshuk—so good-tempered, so obliging, so unwearied; so attentive and obsequious as never other man can be, unless we could unbrutify our faithful dog, and breathe his devoted spirit into a speaking, living human form.

After these three classes of Russian servants, the Germans are the most numerous in St. Petersburg, then the Finlanders, Estonians, and Letts. The French and Tartars fill only particular offices, but these almost exclusively. The English of this class are the fewest, and they, too, seem to fill some particular posts. To describe this division of employment by nations, it will be necessary to mention the different charges and offices in a Russian house more in detail. A review of this kind is, besides, well calculated to throw light upon the domestic life of Russia, as it characterises not only the generally-overlooked class of servants, but in many respects their masters also.

A fully-appointed house of the first class in Russia, without mentioning the numerous resident relations, old aunts, cousins, adopted children, &c., without mentioning the educational staff, the German, French, and Russian masters, tutors and governesses, the family physician, companions and others, who, as *majorum gentium*, must of course be excluded, has so astounding a number of serving-folk of one kind or another, that the like is to be found in no other country in the world. The following may be named as never wanting in the list: the superintendent of accounts, the secretary, the *dvorezki* or *maitre d'hôtel*, the valets of the lord, the valets of the lady, the *dyūtkha* or overseer of the children, the footmen, the *huffetshok* or butler and his adjuncts, the table-decker, the head groom, the coachman and postilions of the lord, the coachman and postilions of the lady, the attendants on the sons of the house and their tutors, the porter, the head cook and his assistant, the baker and the confectioner, the whole body of *mushiks* or servants, *minorum gentium*, the stove-heater, quass brewer, the waiting-maids and wardrobe-keeper of the lady, the waiting-maids of the grown-up daughters and of the governesses, the nurses in and past service and their under-nurses, and, when a private band is maintained, the Russian *kapellmeister* and the musicians.

If all these places are filled with free people, it may be easily supposed that the maintenance of such a household is no trifle in a city where wages are extravagantly high. The servants of the first class, such as the *maitre d'hôtel*, valets de chambre, and the furniture-keeper, generally have as much as one thousand rubles a-year; the head cook, if a Frenchman, two thousand, and sometimes more; the coachmen and footmen thirty to fifty rubles monthly; the foreign waiting-women sixty to eighty monthly;

and even the lowest of the house servants from twenty to thirty, also monthly. Many of these posts are to be filled on each of the twenty estates that the family may possess, under every meridian and parallel; besides the army of stewards, gardeners, Saxon shepherds, miners, commissaries, pensioned servants, &c. who are all to be overlooked and paid from St. Petersburg, the principal residence of the family. For the receipt and payment of money, and the management of the correspondence connected with it, some of the Russian grandees have almost as much counting-house business as a merchant in a considerable way of business. From these counting-houses the servants receive their wages, the pensioners of the family their allowance, and the heads of the house themselves the money for their personal expenses. The head of the financial department—often an intimate friend or near relation of the family—lays at times an account before the chief, of the hundreds of thousands which he has received from the gold and platina mines of the Ural Mountains, from the corn-fields of Moscow, the vineyards of the Crimea and Caucasus, for the wool and tallow from the herds and flocks on the Steppes, or from the salt-mines of Biarmia; and of the hundreds of thousands he has paid for sturgeons and pine-apples, bonnes, lacqueys, and chamber-maids.

The dvorezki, who is considered as the head of the whole tribe of serving-men, and who generally possesses the full confidence of his lord and lady, is usually a Russian, has entered the house a boy, and risen by degrees to his important post. Of course he is a great man in the eyes of the other servants, most of whom he retains or dismisses at his pleasure; and as keeper of the keys to all the stores of the house, all pay their court to him, and even the foreign waiting-maids dare not refuse him at Easter the "Christohs woskress" and the attendant salute.

Of valets and footmen there are often from twelve to twenty in one house, and as they are paraded more than any other before the eyes of the public, the youngest and best-looking men are always picked out. They are dressed with great elegance, and have one livery for the house and another for the promenade—a state livery for balls and visits at court, where they are glorious in velvet and silk, and a mourning suit for the deaths that in families so extensively connected are of frequent occurrence. All these gentry are the supplest, most adroit fellows in the world—born Figaroes; and in their manner, and in their very courteous and dancing-master-like demeanour, leave the lacqueys of other countries far behind. They are generally great draught and chess players, and, with the little capital amassed from their wages, often carry on small money speculations within the house itself, where from time to time ready money is at a premium.

There are no hussars and jägers in a Russian household, but Cossacks and Circassians in their national costume are numerous; and Albanians, Servians, and Armenians, are also sometimes seen

in their rich native dresses; nor are even negroes wanting in this rendezvous of nations. The *dátka*, or overseer of the little boys of the family, is an attendant rarely wanting in a Russian house. Very often he is some veteran soldier, who takes upon himself to meddle a little with education. As this branch of service is very well paid, better qualified persons sometimes pursue it. He is to the boys what the *bonnes* are to the girls. He carries them about, takes them out to walk, tends them in sickness; and it is really admirable to see the patience of these old child-loving veterans with their spoiled charges.

Some families take a pride in having the whole service of the house performed by French domestics, and some have among the first class of attendants, Germans, Swedes, and even Polish *shlakhtitzi* (inferior nobles); but in the stables, and all thereunto belonging, all are national, oriental, and long-bearded. A Tartar coachman is the most fashionable. It is plain that the whole form and essence of the Russian equipage is of Mongol-Tartar origin; the numerous technical Tartar words in use may be cited as a proof of this. According to a Russian's belief, this kind of equipage is so fit and proper that he would not exchange it for any other: in fact, it is so generally liked, that in St. Petersburg it is adopted by all nations, the English excepted, while in other points it is the Russians who adopt foreign modes.

The coachman, therefore, and certainly not to his disadvantage, clothes himself in the old national dress. A fine blue cloth *caftan*, fastened under the left arm with three silver buttons, and girded round his middle by a coloured-silk sash, invests his upper man strait and tightly, leaving the handsome throat bare, and falling in long, rich folds over the lower limbs. On his head he wears a high four-cornered cap, covered with some costly fur, and a handsome bushy beard falls like a rich bordering of fur over his breast. The carriage of the man is worthy of his picturesque costume; both he and his horses seem to be conscious that they are admired. The postillions, clad like the coachman, are pretty boys, from twelve to fourteen years of age. This is a great point. Long lads of sixteen or eighteen on the leaders would offend every Russian eye. As no person of rank, in the majority of Russian cities, ever drives with less than four horses; as not only the master of the family, but the mistress also, has a coach-and-four for her own use, while in some there is another carriage for the children; the number of horses and drivers in many private establishments may be easily imagined. Their studs often emulate those of princes.

In the kitchen department—no insignificant one anywhere, but least of all in Russia—all is French, or Frenchified. The majority of the Russian nobles are quite happy when they can find a Frenchman who, for some two thousand or three thousand rubles yearly, will have the goodness to direct their kitchens, and to whose humours and caprices they are willing in return to accommodate



themselves. "We poor fellows," said a Russian cook to me once, "if we do not do everything properly, it's *v' polizie* (to the police) directly, or *v' Sibir* (to Siberia); *palki nuda* (stripes are wanted here)! But if a French cook is found fault with for spoiling a dish, he answers, 'No one need mind eating that. It is not nice, perhaps, but it is wholesome.'"

These cooks, who are very great gentlemen, and drive to market in elegant equipages, make out most incredible bills. In some houses the cost of the table amounts to some hundreds of thousands of rubles. Many people have found it advisable to make an arrangement with the cook to furnish the dinner at so much a head. Ten rubles is an average sum. On extraordinary occasions it will be fifty, a hundred, and even more. The hospitality maintained in some of the houses, where every day a number of strangers find their places at the host's table, is not therefore quite so cheap as some travellers represent it.

St. Petersburg is the high school for all the cooks of the empire. Every noble of the interior has a number of young men *en pension*, in the kitchens of the great houses in St. Petersburg, who are to return accomplished cooks; and a family from the capital removing to the interior with the whole corps of Frenchified servants, soon have their kitchen swarming with a multitude of candidates striving to acquire new and piquant recipes from the initiated.

Although there is a post-office in St. Petersburg, there are still so many commissions to be executed in a great house which do not fall exactly within any one's department, that it is thought necessary to keep a "house-courier" to drive out every morning, noon, and evening, to deliver letters, parcels, and so forth. The merchants on the Vassili Ostrof have a similar figurant in their houses to carry out letters and money, whom they call "Artelsh-tshik." He is generally a long-bearded Russ, and by virtue of his beard a trustworthy man, for he is often employed to carry hundreds of thousands, without any uneasiness being felt for their safety. When we consider the numbers already mentioned, the servants, and the servants' servants, and that many of them are married, and live in the house with all their *et ceteras*, it will be admitted that a Russian house must be tolerably well filled and swarming in every corner. The whole of the lower regions is commonly given up to them, where they pack themselves as well as they can with bag and baggage, home-made furniture, and household utensils, not forgetting the pictures of saints, and their everlasting lamps.

Yet it is well known that a Russian nobleman, in spite of his train of servants, or perhaps because of his train of servants, is very badly served. As no one will do what is "not in his place," a commission has a vast number of hands to go through before it is executed. A valet is asked for a glass of water; he tells a footman, who calls to a scullion; he is found sleeping somewhere,

and after a long search after a decanter, runs to the spring, and the water comes, perhaps, at last, when his master is no longer thirsty. "Sluga! pasluish!" (here, servant! here!) is called from a door. "Sei tshas! sei tshas! sei minut!" (directly! directly! this minute!) is answered from above and below, from staircase and courtyard. The caller waits a quarter of an hour, but no one comes; for Paul supposes that Ivan is gone, and Matwei knows that Vauka heard as well as he. The call is repeated. "Sluga! pasluishi!" and "Sei tshas!" is echoed back, but no servant comes; and a hundred times a day a man may be convinced of the truth of the Russian proverb, which says, "Sei tshas" means to-morrow morning, and "Sei minut" this day week. Yet they fancy there is no doing without a retinue of servants.

"Ah! you really embarrass me with your kind visit," said Prince N—— to a friend who came unexpectedly to dine with him. "I must apologise to you, for you will be very badly attended to. One-half of my servants are gone hunting with my son; I have sent out some on business myself; and my good mother, who has driven out of town to pay a visit, has taken away nearly all the rest." Nevertheless, there were five diligent pair of hands to wait on twelve persons.

It is singular that the male servants should be much more numerous than the female. Generally the rooms are swept and the beds made by men, and the ladies, in addition to their waiting-maids, have a chamberlain who attends them everywhere. The waiting-damsels are of all nations: arch Parisian grisettes; Swiss maidens pining with home-sickness; Swedes from Stockholm come to seek a better fortune, *i.e.* more money; German Amalias, or Matildas, who write sentimental verses; Russian Sofinkas or Olgas, very discontented at the number of foreigners they see preferred to themselves; and over all this *pot pourri* of nationality the same Russian sauce is poured. They speak a jargon of half Russian, half French, garnished with many other words from many other languages; they must dress gaily and fashionably to please their mistresses, try to make themselves agreeable, and fall in with the prevailing tone.

The nurses occupy a remarkable position in Russia, the same or nearly so that they do with all the Caucasian nations, among whom the nurse remains often for life; the friend and adviser of her foster-child, and where a noble or princely house is sure to contain a whole chorus of nurses, as well those of the grown-up as of the younger children, and of the master and mistress of the family. So long as she remains in the house, the nurse is always an object of distinguished regard to all her housemates; she is flattered and spoiled on all sides, and as everything is done to please her for the sake of the child, she seldom fails to turn out a very capricious, bold, obtrusive, and particularly well-fed person. Entrusted with the mother's costliest treasure, the nurse accompanies her lady everywhere—to church, to the pro-

menade, to the boudoir, and in the carriage. As these nurses are peasant-women who have not laid aside the habits of their homes, and yet whose places demand a certain richness of dress, the national female costume is seen in them in its fullest splendour, as the male costume is with the coachmen. The Russian nurses are seen on the public walks in rich gold brocaded stuffs, and high kakoshniks of false and real pearls on their heads; the joyous look, the red cheeks of these gaudy peacocks, the boldness and assurance of their demeanour, explain at once the relation in which they stand. Long after their period of service has expired, they receive abundance of presents from the family, whose favour is extended also to the foster-children. Something of superstition is mingled with this kindness, as in almost every custom of the Russians, for they ascribe to the nurse and her children all manner of mysterious influence over the nursling.

The Germans resident in Russia relate terrible stories of these Russian nurses. Their childlike gaiety and humour fit them peculiarly for sport and merriment with children; but on the other hand, when they get out of patience, they have recourse to the most barbarous and inhuman means to quiet their noisy little charges. For instance, striking them on the head till they are stupefied, holding them by the feet with their head downwards till the blood mounts to the head, and shaking them so violently as to throw them into convulsions, besides frightening the elder children by dressing themselves up as ghosts. Other tricks so detestable have been attributed to them that they will not bear repetition. A lady who had had a Russian nurse told me frightful stories of what she had endured from her, and seemed to think it little short of a miracle that she had escaped with so much health and understanding after such treatment. The following anecdote is not the only one of the kind I have heard in St. Petersburg:—A family of rank came to St. Petersburg from Moscow on business. Going one day to pay a visit in the city, they left their daughter, a child five years of age, at home with her nurse. On their return in the evening the half-intoxicated nurse fell at their feet shedding a torrent of tears, and exclaiming, "Pamiluit'ye; vuinovat, vuinovat!" (Have compassion on me; I am guilty, I am guilty!); and told them how she had left the child a few minutes alone, and that when she came back it was nowhere to be found, it had been stolen. The despairing parents made every possible search, but in vain, and were at length compelled to return childless to Moscow. The nurse appeared so wretched that she was forgiven. About three years afterwards the father came again to St. Petersburg, and while passing one day through the streets, thinking of his lost Anninka, he heard a feeble voice crying out, "Papinka, papinka!" (Papa, papa!) He turned and saw his little daughter muffled in rags, miserable and sickly, sitting in a cart drawn by a filthy beggar-woman. "Woman, where did you get that child?" cried he,

seizing her and snatching the child, who sunk sobbing and half-naked in his arms. On examination, it appeared that the beggar had bought the poor little creature from the nurse for twenty rubles, and reduced her to the state in which she was found, purposely to excite compassion. Begging is no longer permitted by the police, and such things are now more likely to happen in London or Paris than in St. Petersburg.

In many wealthy families a good music-master is often retained, and in some, particularly in the provinces, a private band. In fact, it is easy enough for a nobleman to get one together; his peasants are always at hand, and learn as easily to play on the violin as to clean his boots. It is only necessary to have a German musician in the house, which is indeed somewhat expensive, and to let him tutor them for a time, till a band is formed; and then at a ball, or on any such occasion, the lord has only to muster the stove-heaters and superfluous table-deckers to have a very tolerable orchestra. Here and there, where the taste is more refined, three or four well-paid German musicians will be found on the establishment; but this is rare, and so are the private horn-bands, which foreigners on their first arrival at St. Petersburg seem to expect to hear from every house.

On some of the estates schools have been established, where a select number of peasant-youths are taught reading, writing, &c. in order to render them servicable afterwards, as gardeners and bailiffs, or in St. Petersburg as grooms of the chamber and secretaries. These youths bring with them the capacity for further improvement. Many of them acquire the arts of reading and writing, they themselves scarcely know how, and even the little postilions may often be seen in a corner of the stables diligently forming the letters with their frozen fingers. Nothing can excite the surprise of a stranger more than the extraordinary passion for reading now prevalent among servants in Russia. The greater part of the ante-chambers of the nobles, where there are always a number of servants assembled, are regular reading-rooms; those who are not playing at draughts, the favourite game, are generally reading. It is no rare thing to see six or eight in different corners thus engaged; and if their occupation strikes a foreigner, who expects nothing but laziness and barbarism, with admiration, as indicative of advancing civilization, his admiration will rise to astonishment if he give himself the trouble of inquiring into the nature of their studies. A translation of Bourrienne's *Mémoires*, Karamsin's *History of Russia*, the *Fables of Kruloff*, the *Novels of Prince Odojevsky*, the *Tales of Baron Brambures*, Bantysh Kamensky's *History of Lesser Russia*, Polevoy's *Outlines of the History of the World*, a translation of the *Æneid*, and others of the same kind, are the works he will find. I know not whether our domestics have yet risen to Luden's *History of the Germans*, or Raumer's *Hohenstaufen*.

It is worthy of remark, that the young literature of Russia, which has already produced much that is excellent, as yet entirely unknown to us, has hitherto thrown off none of a base and spurious kind. That with the good much that is worthless exists, is undeniable, particularly in the scientific branches, where all is good for nothing; but as it was calculated for the educated classes, it contains nothing vulgar, insipid, or common. The servants, and such of the lower classes as are more and more becoming readers, are compelled to satisfy their literary appetite with wholesome food. Their taste will refine itself in consequence, and enough has already been written in Russia to keep a zealous reader in breath. Circulating libraries abound in St. Petersburg. In the provinces, of course, it is more difficult to obtain books; and there, many really touching examples of the literary yearnings of the people are related. I knew an old chamberlain, who, in his leisure hours, had learned Kruiloff's Fables by heart, and had read Karamsin's History of Russia six times through, because he could get no other books. All that is written about Napoleon among us is translated directly into Russian, and read by all classes; in the ante-chambers particularly, with uncommon ardour.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ARSENALS.

At no time are the streets of St. Petersburg wanting in soldiers and military processions; but most uninterrupted and diligent are the rush and roll of flags and drums, and the steady tramp of the military in the streets of that part of the city called by the Russians Liteinaya, which the troops must pass through on entering the city from the Vilborg side, over Sunday Bridge, and which moreover contains a number of military institutions: the barracks and stables for the artillery, and the two arsenals, the new and the old. The old arsenal, an enormous building, was erected by Count Orloff at his own cost, and presented to the Empress Catherine.\* The new one was built by the Emperor Alexander, in a very magnificent style. Both are filled with glittering weapons, trophies, old military engines, and anti-

\* Such patriotic gifts are not rare among the wealthy subjects of the Russian emperors. We often hear, Count — has given a million to raise a corps of cadets; that Prince — has built a barrack at his own expense; or that merchant — has given to some public library a hundred thousand rubles. In the year 1812, magnificent offerings of this kind were made; but even in times of peace, not only legacies are left to the state, but, what is more remarkable, donations *inter vivos*, are made.

quities of importance in Russian history. A short account of them may not be uninteresting to the reader; particularly as this subject has been much neglected in the different works on St. Petersburg; which is the more remarkable, as everything here is open to everybody.

The endless ranges of apartments in both arsenals are adorned with countless numbers of trophies formed of different weapons; innumerable flags, and instruments of murder, elegantly arranged into garlands, tapestries, and chamber arabesques, as if they were flowers and fruit; children of Pomona and Flora, and not the work of the Cyclops: the implements of Mars and the Furies. Man loves to sport poetically with the serious. Among all nations the military dress is variegated, gay, glittering, and adorned. While our citizens go about their peaceful employments in sad-coloured garments, our warriors go to battle shining in all the colours of the rainbow. One would think black were a more fitting colour, the better to remind them of the melancholy nature of their trade; to diminish their thirst for slaughter, to which the outward pomp of their business seems almost to invite. Their weapons should not be displayed in elegant ornamental compositions in arsenals, but kept piled up in the vaults of their churches; perhaps wars would then be less frequent, and arms not to be taken up lightly, but only in the name of God and our native land.

Some of the historical souvenirs and antiquities are highly interesting. For example, the standards of the Strelitz; huge things made of pieces of silk sewed together, and adorned with many highly original pictures characteristic of that fanatical Russian pratorian band, who may be justly called the Janizaries of Christianity. They are greatly deserving of the attention of historians; although, as far as I know, they have not yet been noticed by any. In the middle of the flag sits God the Father, holding the last judgment; over his head is the azure sky of Paradise; beneath him blaze the flames of the infernal gulf; at his right hand stand the just, that is, a chorus of Russian priests, a division of Strelitzes, and a number of bearded Russians; to his left, the unbelievers and the wicked, that is, a tribe of Jews, Turks, and Tartars, negroes; and another crowd in the dresses of Nyemtzi, or German West Europeans. Under each group the national name is inscribed; and so, also, by those tormented in the flames of hell. "A Turban, a German, a Miser, a Murderer," &c. Many angels, armed with iron rods, are busied in delivering the rest of the unbelievers, the shrieking Jews, Mahomedans, and other infidels, to the custody of the devils. Such unnoticed pictures as these often speak more plainly than anything else what is passing in the secret soul. Near the flags lie a number of the accoutrements of the Strelitzes, and the images of their patron saints. Each saint has its own little case; of which a whole row, fastened to straps, were worn on the breast,

in a fashion similar to the Circassians. Some Russian cannon of the period are also placed here: they are very large, cast in iron, and ornamented with silver and gold.

To every emperor and empress since Peter the Great a separate apartment is devoted, containing the clothes, weapons, and utensils belonging to them; with the instruments of war in use at that time, uniforms, &c. &c. The uniforms of distinguished generals, with all their orders, crosses, and ribbons, are here deposited in glass cases; many thousand ells of historically interesting ribbons figure among them. With the help of this cabinet a very good history of the Russian army might be composed. We may here learn that the Semeonoff and Preobrazhenski regiments of the guards, the most important and celebrated legions, the core of the Russian praetorian bands, during their century of existence, have changed their uniforms five-and-twenty times; and that it does not now in the least resemble what it was a hundred years ago. The changes of the Russian soldier from white to black, from red to green, from long to short, and from wide to narrow, are more manifold than those from caterpillar to chrysalis—from chrysalis to butterfly. In the chamber of Alexander there are not less than sixty orders that he wore; the broad ribbon of the order of St. George, however, is not among them; the emperor would not accept it, although it was decreed him several times by the chapter of the order and the senate. This order is only given for a great battle won, for the preservation of the empire, or the restoration of peace by a series of military exploits; and the emperor, who could not ascribe one of these deeds to himself personally, refused the honour, in order to maintain the credit of the order and its laws.

Ever since Peter the Great, the Russian emperors have voluntarily subjected themselves to their own laws and ordinances, and thereby given their subjects a great example. The pike which Peter carried as a volunteer in his own army, the uniforms he wore as sergeant, captain, and colonel, the leathern shirt he wore as a carpenter, all of which are preserved in the arsenal, constantly warn his successors to follow his example. In Peter's apartment there is still kept the cabriolet he made use of to measure the roads; the number of revolutions made by the wheels are shown by the machinery contained in the box behind. On the lid of this box is a curious old picture representing Peter's method of travelling. It is a portrait of the cabriolet itself, drawn by one horse, and driven by Peter. Behind him are newly-built houses, and gardens laid out; before him a forest and a wilderness, to the annihilation of which he is boldly proceeding; behind him the heavens are serene, before him the clouds are heaped up like rocks. As this picture was probably designed by Peter himself, it shows what he thought of himself.

In remarkable contrast with the little, modest cabriolet of the

road-making and measuring emperor is the great triumphal car, with its flags and kettle-drums, which Peter the Second drove before the band of his guards, at the time when the ladies wore hoop-petticoats and the gentlemen long perriwigs. Paul's rocking-horse; Peter the Third's Holstein cuirassiers, which were so great a cause of vexation to the native Russians; Senka Rasin's state chair of ebony, garnished with rude pistols instead of lacc, the uniform of General Miloradovitsh,\* in which the hole made by the bullet that pierced his heart in the revolt of the 14th of December is yet to be seen: all furnish employment for the imagination of the historian.

In this collection, the accoutrements of neighbouring states have not been neglected; even the equipments of the Japanese and Chinese may here be studied. The cuirasses and coats of mail of the Japanese guards are made of tortoise-shell, which cover the whole body, and are put together in small scales: the face is concealed in a black mask representing an open-mouthed dragon. The Chinese soldier is clothed from head to foot in thickly-wadded cotton: if he cannot move about much in battle, he must be, at all events, in some measure protected against arrows and cudgels. Grimacing masks are also in use among them. The timid have everywhere a great wish to infuse into others, by means of disguises, that terror which they cannot inspire by their own courage. The Chinese weapons appear to have the same aim: among them is a halberd, of which the edge of the axe is nearly six feet long—an instrument of murder which would require a free space of ten feet diameter for every soldier to wield properly; it seems intended for the destruction of giants; but a Roman soldier with his short sword would have been quite safe from it. Countless as are the uniforms, there is scarcely one to which the Russians have not once been opposed, the Japanese not excepted, and scarcely one from which they have not torn some trophy of victory.

Then in the arsenals of St. Petersburg are splendid silver shields of Turkish leaders; Polish, Prussian, French, and Persian flags; and at least a thousand ells of silk in Turkish standards, besides a whole heap of crescents taken from the mosques. In one room we have an opportunity of admiring the singular forms of keys among various nations, belonging to Persian, Grusinian, and Turkish fortresses stormed by the Russians. By every bunch of keys is a view of the city that surrendered them.

A cannon-foundry is annexed to the new arsenal, where a powerful steam-engine is at work. The borers are held firm, and the heavy metal pieces of ordnance are made to turn on them by the steam-engine; more force is thus given to the thrust by their own weight than the lighter borer could impart. I should like

\* The command of the emperor to deposit the uniform of a general or commander in a public place, the arsenals of St. Petersburg or Moscow, or in any church, is a peculiar distinction which has only fallen to the lot of a few patriots.



to see the man who has now and then cast a glance on the dial-plate of time, and could walk among these fire-vomiters without emotion. Truly, in the schools, in the workshops, they are labouring also at the grandeur of the empire. The merchant in his speculations, and the mechanic improving in his manipulations, are toiling indirectly to increase its power and extent; but the cannon-founder stands in more immediate reference to future battle, and all his work betrays too evidently his hostile purpose. Every touch-hole that he bores, every gun's mouth that he polishes, excites, in a warlike and growing state like Russia, hope, fear, compassion, and the lust of battle.

From this foundry the marine as well as the land artillery is supplied: we saw here guns to carry one hundred and twenty pound balls. God give these monsters full draughts from ocean's beakers, and sink them to its lowest depths, where, oblivious of their fires, they may become the life-bowls of the shark, and a safe dwelling and deposit for the oyster and its brood! Such must, in fact, be the destiny of many. The workman knows not whether he toils at a fire-vomiter or a water-drinker—at a giver of death or a protector of life—at a hurler of thunder or a house for a mute fish.

When the cannon are cast, bored, and finished, amid the songs of the workmen—(a Russian workman is always singing, whether in the service of Ceres or of Mars)—they are brought to the place of trial, where they are thoroughly examined by the engineers and masters of the works, till at last the master sets his stamp upon them and baptizes them. The heavy birth is accomplished. “Go on thy bloody path, thou giant child, and let thy first stammering be in thunder! Scare the enemy from the paternal fields! Be thy country's truest friend and turn thy forehead to the foe, that her temples may stand, her gardens bloom, and her children flourish in peace!”

The finished cannon are piled up in the spacious inner courts of the arsenal. We saw as many here, ready to the last nail, with rammer, match, and sponge, as would have sufficed to give the spectacle of the battle of Leipsic over again. We counted eight hundred in one place, as yet all free from crime and blood; but they bear evil in their hearts, and but await the wave of one mighty hand to begin, with the aid of a thousand willing ones, their destructive flight.

The veil that hangs over Europe's future is impenetrable, and the West looks with terror for the moment when it shall be raised. Where will be the theatre?—what the parts that will be played by those actors, now ready painted and dressed? Whose is the burning city?—whose the host at which they are to aim? To whom will victory give the palm? Will they enter Vienna, or Berlin, or Paris? Triumphant, to threaten yet further, or captive and fettered, as silent trophies to adorn their public buildings?

The courts of the arsenals are filled with balls, the doors and passages adorned with them in pyramids. They are black, and no prophetic or fate-proclaiming spirit-hand has yet inscribed upon them "The — of November, 18—, to appear in the market-places of Olmütz;" or "in the spring of 18—, with the first swallows, in Constantinople;" or "to awaken up the English sailors at Whitsuntide;" or "to greet the Parisians on New Year's Eve;" or "in 19—, to bring the rebellious Swedes to submission;" or "in 1910, to make the Chinese pliant." In fact, so large a future lies before the Russian cannon-balls, their destiny is so adventurous, that Fancy is tamed when she ponders on all the possible events in their existence, and on all the pens and printing-presses to which the description of their exploits may give employment.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE IMPERIAL PALACES.

WHEN the Emperor Paul began to be afraid of his subjects, he entrenched himself behind the strong walls of the Michailow Samok (fort). He pulled down the old Summer Palace\* on the Fontanka, and built in its stead one of granite, surrounded by walls and ditches, and bristling with cannon, and dedicated it to the Archangel Michael, according to Russian custom, which dedicates to protecting saints and angels not only churches, but fortresses, castles, and other buildings. The castle has a more gloomy exterior than the other palaces of St. Petersburg, and an extraordinary style of architecture. It is an immense, high, strong, massive square, whose four façades all differ the one from the other. The ditches are again partly filled up, and laid out in gardens, but the main entrance is still reached over several drawbridges, like a knightly castle in the middle ages. In the square before the chief gate stands a monument, insignificant enough as a work of art, which Paul erected to Peter the Great, with the inscription, "Prodiadu Pravnu" (the Grandson to the Grandfather). Over the principal door, which is overloaded with architectural ornaments, is inscribed in golden letters a passage from the Bible in the old Slavonian language: "On thy house will the blessing of the Lord rest for evermore." This prophecy was badly fulfilled, for the emperor had only inhabited the house three months when he met his death from a hand that his cannon could not protect him against.

\* In opposition to this old Summer Palace, the usual residence of the emperor is called the Winter Palace; which name, since the disappearance of the "Summer Palace," is meaningless.

The palace was built with extraordinary rapidity: five thousand men were employed on it daily till its completion. To dry the walls more quickly, large iron plates were made red-hot, and fastened to the walls for a time. Nevertheless, the masses of stone and lime were not to be dried so rapidly, and very soon after the death of the emperor the palace was abandoned as quite uninhabitable. Although it has been completely repaired, it has never been dwelt in since, but applied to other purposes. The expense of the building was not less than eighteen millions of rubles. By taking sufficient time to it, it might easily have been done for six millions. The halls and spaces of the castle are large and labyrinth-like. A splendid marble staircase leads to the first story, and the vestibules and corridors are paved with beautiful kinds of marble. The floorings of the saloons were taken from the Tauride Palace, because the new ones could not be waited for. They have since been restored to their old places. The rooms where Paul was murdered are sealed and walled up. The Russians generally do this with the rooms in which their parents die. They have a certain dread of them, and never enter them willingly. The Emperor Alexander never entered them. The present emperor, who dreaded neither the cholera in Moscow, nor revolt in St. Petersburg, nor the dagger in Warsaw, but shows a bold countenance everywhere, has viewed them several times. These rooms, easily recognizable from without by their darkened and dusty windows, are on the second story. The apartments of the beautiful Lapuchin are directly under, on the first floor. They are now inhabited by the keeper of the castle. The stairs which led down from them are broken away. During the reign of Alexander, the castle fell so much into decay, that when Nicholas caused it to be restored, it cost sixty-two thousand rubles merely to remove the dirt and rubbish.

The old Michailoff Palace is now the abode of the School of Engineers. One hundred and fifty young persons here receive their mathematical and physical education. Its gardens are filled with blooming young cadets, who play and exercise there; and the former audience and banqueting-rooms are partly used as school, examination, sleeping, and eating-rooms for the pupils, and partly to hold collections of various objects of a very attractive kind, of the highest interest for Russian engineering and the science of fortification. It is wonderful what progress they have already made in this branch.

Russia, with reference to its military fortifications, is divided into ten circles. To the objects relating to the fortification of each circle a separate hall is devoted. In large presses in the halls are kept all the plans, general and special, of already existing or projected fortresses. Each fortress has its own press for the *matériel*, in which are specimens of the bricks, kinds of earth, and the different rocks which lie in the neighbourhood,

and of which the fortresses are, or are to be, constructed. Lastly, on large stands in the middle of the halls are to be seen all the fortified places in Russia, modelled in clay and wood, and with such exactness, that not the slightest elevation or sinking of the ground, not a tree or a house, is forgotten. In this manner are presented, among others, the most striking pictures of Kiev, Reval, and Riga. It is worthy of remark, that among them is a complete representation of all the castles of the Dardanelles, with their bastions and towers, and the most minute details of all the little creeks of the Hellespont, and the neighbouring heights and rocks. By means of these models, the whole plan of attack on the Dardanelles could be directed from St. Petersburg. It is a question whether the English have had a like foresight and possess a similar picture in detail. The mingling of the castles of the Dardanelles with those already garrisoned by Russian troops indicates that the Russians already look upon them as their own, and keeps warm the memory of Alexander's saying, "*Il faut avoir les clefs de notre maison dans la poche.*"

There can be no doubt that the new Michailoff Palace, the residence of the Grand Duke Michael, is the most elegant building in St. Petersburg. It was built in 1820 by an Italian of the name of Rossi. The interior is decidedly the handsomest and most tasteful in decoration and furniture in the whole city; and it is a real enjoyment to feast the eye on the noble architectural proportions of the exterior. It would not be easy to give to a royal edifice so advantageous a position as this palace possesses: even the Winter Palace has it not. Open from all sides, it expands, with all its various wings and court-yards, in the most graceful manner, presenting a complete and perfect picture to the eye; not a tower, point, or supernumerary building to disturb the beautiful proportions. Behind the palace lies the Little Summer Garden, as it is called, whose lofty trees and groups of foliage form a pleasing contrast with the elegant architectural lines. Before the chief front is a spacious lawn sprinkled with graceful little buildings, the turf embroidered with tufts of flowers and shrubs. The inner court is divided from it by an iron grating, the design of which, closely examined, must be admitted to be a model of good taste. All the out-buildings and numerous courts between them are in such harmony with each other and the main building, that it is evident the whole was one design, and that nothing has been afterwards added or patched on. All the buildings around are occupied by the establishments of the Grand Duke Michael; so much so, that this quarter of the city might almost be called his kingdom. Here are the dwellings of his officers, his stables, his riding-school, &c. The latter deserves particular mention, as the finest of the kind that exists anywhere. In the establishment fifty young people are instructed in riding, and in all arts that have the remotest reference to horse or rider. For this object, and for the carousals in the fine riding-house.

which the court is often present, a number of the finest horses are kept, and both horses and riders are so well lodged and fed, that it is a pleasure to pass through the range of clean and elegant sleeping-rooms, sitting and school-rooms, saddle-rooms, stables, &c. All these apartments have double folding-doors in the centre, which stand open the whole day. A long carpet is laid along all the floors down to the stable, and the inspector at a glance can overlook everything; can satisfy himself whether the beautiful white Arabian Asir, so celebrated for his silken hair and broad forehead, and the fiery Haimak of English blood, out of a mare from the Orloff stud, are in good condition. At the same time, he can see what the young cadets, who value themselves so much on their rosy cheeks and sprouting beards, are doing in their chambers. It is wonderful how pure the air is kept in spite of this slight separation: it is as if the stud were perfumed with eau-de-Cologne as well as the cadets.

The young men go through their course of study in six years. Ten are dismissed every year to the army as riding-masters. The art of riding was originally established by Germans in Russia; but it has undergone various modifications, and the riding-masters now coming from Germany must go through a school again to accomplish the requisite feats of art. In the Russian cavalry, the horses must constantly maintain such parade paces that the breaking-in they get from one rider is not enough. The poor animals feel too painfully the severity of Russian discipline; and there is no army, where, notwithstanding the goodness of the horses, so many are destroyed in the breaking-in and the parade as in the Russian. Nevertheless, a tournament or a quadrille executed by these beautiful steeds in the presence of the court, and by a brilliant illumination, is by no means an uninteresting spectacle; the spectators sometimes take a part in it. The riding-school is splendidly decorated on these occasions: among other things there are six looking-glasses, so large that the rider can see himself from head to foot. To keep these glasses in good condition, and repair what the horses' hoofs have spoiled, must bring a good deal of money to the imperial manufactory.

Within the Michailoff quarter, if we may make use of the expression, is the colossal Exercising-house. This *manège* covers a space, unbroken by a single pillar, of six hundred and fifty feet long and one hundred and fifty wide. A regiment can go through its evolutions there with perfect convenience; a battalion may manoeuvre there; and two squadrons might fight a battle there. This establishment originated, as did nearly all such plans, in St. Petersburg, in the time of Paul. Sixteen giant stoves warm the building, and the walls are lined with thick woollen cloth. The roof with its appendages presses on the thick walls with a weight of three hundred thousand hundred weight; the iron rods alone weigh twelve millions eight hundred and forty thousand pounds, and to this must be added three thousand great trunks.

of trees made use of in the wood-work, and two thousand square fathoms of iron plates with which the whole is covered without. The Circassians may be generally seen here busied in their feats of horsemanship, or shooting at a mark, at which times a student in acoustics may make many interesting observations. A pistol-shot awakens so prodigious an echo, that heard from the street one might fancy the whole building falling in one crash.

When Potemkin, the conqueror of the Khan of the Crimea, resided in the Tauride Palace, presented to him, and afterwards purchased from him by Catherine, and, with his inordinate love of show, animated and adorned those desolate apartments, the palace may have answered the expectations raised by its name. It should have been seen in the days when the insolent and profuse favourite gave his empress a triumphal fête. It looks now like a ball-room on the morning after a festival. The exterior can never have laid claim to any particular beauty, and of the best of its contents it has been robbed to adorn other palaces. Although it is now and then inhabited by the imperial family in the spring, the furniture is of a very ordinary description, the large looking-glasses are dimmed, the tables and chairs old-fashioned: the collection of antiquities displayed in the first saloon contains little that is valuable or original; and the pictures are for the most part bad copies of good originals. The enormous ball-room, the largest in St. Petersburg, is the only part on which the palace can pride itself. An idea may be formed of its size from the fact, that twenty thousand wax-lights are necessary to light it up completely, and that the colossal group of the Laocöon at the one end can be plainly seen from the other only by means of a telescope. The last grand festival given here was on the marriage of the Grand Duke Michael, to which occasion the present decorations were owing. The marble is all false, the silver is plated copper, the pillars and statues are of brick, and the pictures copies. The looking-glasses, although ten feet wide, and lofty in proportion, are so badly made, that the surface on examination is found to be all in waves and full of bubbles: they belong to an early period of the St. Petersburg manufactory, and a comparison with the modern productions will show the progress made in this branch of industry.

In one of the numerous chambers inhabited by the Emperor Alexander, we had an opportunity of studying the titles of the Russian great officers of state, for in the bureaux and drawers we found a number of envelopes with the addresses printed on them: "Natschalniku Morskago Shtaba Moyego". (To the Chief of my Marine Staff); "Glavnonatshaltvuyashtshemu nad Potshtovim Department" (To the Principal of the Post Department). A table-cover with some drops of wax from the candles used by Alexander, and some crayon-drawings by his admirable consort Elizabeth, and other objects of the same kind, will not be seen without interest.

The Annitshkoff Palace is much more frequently inhabited by the present imperial family than the Tauride Palace. The former stands on the great Prospekt in the neighbourhood of the Fontanka, and closes the brilliant range of palaces in that street. It was originally built by Elizabeth, and bestowed on Count Rasumoffsky, then twice bought by Catherine, and twice given to Prince Potemkin; it is now the favourite abode of the emperor, and handsomely built, but has no particular historical interest. A part of the court constantly resides here; here also the emperor holds the greater number of his councils, receives ambassadors, &c.: hence the cabinet of St. Petersburg may be called the cabinet of Annitshkoff, as that of London is called the cabinet of St. James's, and that of Paris the cabinet of the Tuileries.

The pitiless flames of 1837 having consumed the whole of the splendid interior of the Winter Palace, the White Hall, and the Hall of St. George, the Hall of the Generals, with its four hundred portraits of marshals, admirals, and generals; the apartments of the empress with all their costly contents, the labour of thousands of hands; the splendid malachite vases, and beautiful chimney-pieces and pillars of jasper; a detailed account of the palace as it formerly was would possess little interest.

Those who have seen the Winter Palace before the conflagration will hardly reflect without sorrow on the enormous mass of wealth and industry devoured by the greedy flames. It is a question whether, since the burning of Persepolis, so many and such precious fruits of human art and labour have within six hours vanished into smoke. The glorious and prosperous reigns and the magnificent courts of Elizabeth and Catherine, and the tasteful courts of Alexander and Nicholas, had for nearly a century been amassing these treasures. The effect of this one conflagration on the industry of St. Petersburg has been and still must be great. It will demand millions to restore what has been lost. The fortunes of many families—nay, many new branches of industry—may be said to have arisen from the ashes of the Winter Palace. The fire makes an epoch in the history of the city. From it many families date their titles and diplomas, their rise and prosperity; many also their disgrace and fall.

The suites of apartments were perfect labyrinths: it is said that not less than six thousand persons had their abode there. Even the chief of the imperial household, who had filled that post for twelve years, was not, it is said, perfectly acquainted with all parts of the building. As in the forests of the great landholders many colonies are formed for years together, of which the owner takes no notice, so there nestled many a one in this palace not included amongst the regular inhabitants. The watchers on the roof, placed there for different purposes, among others to keep the water in the tanks from freezing during the winter by casting in red-hot balls, built themselves huts between the chimneys, took their wives and children there, and even kept poultry and goats,

which fed on the grass of the roof: it is said that at last some cows were introduced, but this abuse had been corrected before the occurrence of the fire.

The Hermitage joins the Winter Palace to the east; then follow the imperial theatre, some other palaces belonging to private persons, and last of all the Marble Palace. Without doubt, every one on hearing this name will picture to himself an elegant, white, gay-looking palace, shining from afar like a temple of Solomon on the banks of the Neva, and will not be a little astonished to find it a dark, fortress-looking building. Such at least is its appearance among the cheerful, smiling palaces of St. Petersburg, though it might not be so striking in gloomier cities. It ought more properly to have been called the Granite Palace, for much more granite and iron have been employed on it than marble. The extraordinary massive walls are built of blocks of granite, the supports of the roof are iron beams, the roof itself is sheet copper, the window-frames are gilded copper. The palace was last inhabited by the Grand Duke Constantine, and is now evidently much neglected. The above-named are the only imperial residences in St. Petersburg itself. The number of the present imperial family (the Russian throne was never surrounded by so many princes and princesses as at present) affords room for conjecture that later travellers will find more palaces to describe.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE HERMITAGE.

It is a well-known fact, that Catherine built her Hermitage, as Frederick built his Sans-Souci, and Numa Pompilius his grotto of Egeria. So many have made a pilgrimage to the Hermitage and told of its splendours, that it seems a twice-told tale to speak of it again. As it is said, however, that the building, or at least the greater part of it, is to be pulled down and re-constructed on a new plan, and as we may be the last to speak of it as Catherine arranged it, those who are not prepared to pack their travelling-trunks and set off for the north this winter, will not perhaps object to another description of the doomed edifice. The treasures contained in the place are, moreover, so abundant, that thousands might wander through it, and every one find something new, that had escaped the attention of his predecessors.

The Hermitage, therefore, be it said for the hundredth and the last time (?), is no cloistered solitude, no rocky grotto hidden amid the waters of the Neva's murmuring sources, but a magnificent palace, a great temple of the Muses, loftily and proudly throned at the mouth of the broad river: a temple in which every



mental enjoyment has an altar reared in its honour. The forests of masts excepted, no forests are here to be seen; nor, except the bears and foxes worn by the St. Petersburg *élégants* on the court quay, are there any wild animals in this wilderness: the rocks of this solitude are chiselled, polished, and perforated by well-frequented saloons; the hermit is an empress; the muses, nymphs, and other divinities of the woods, are visible and warm-blooded princesses and countesses fed with the nectar and ambrosia of the imperial table.

The empress built this magic temple for the recreation of her leisure in the conversation of men of learning; and for the preservation of the productions of art; and it is well known how attractive, how splendid and luxurious, were the evenings passed here, when the business transacted in the Winter Palace was ended, and when, traversing the covered passages and bridges that connected the buildings, she entered her own magic creation, where she had formed a little republic of arts and letters. We possess many an alluring picture by Storch; by Dupré de St. Maure, and by others who took a part in those evenings, of the perfect freedom and equality that reigned here, in accordance with the ukases suspended in all the apartments of the palace. Musicians displayed their talents, artists their works, and men of wit their opinions; and the pictures which we see elsewhere only as allegorical representations of art and science-loving princes, were here every day realised. On the roof of the building, the mighty Semiramis of the north had created a garden with flowers, shrubs, and lofty trees, heated in winter by subterranean vaults, and illuminated in summer, and many might here really esteem their abode more splendid than the Grecian Olympus.

It is true the soul is now wanting to the whole, yet enough remains to quicken the spirit and warm the heart. Catherine's garden yet blooms, though the birds she fed have long since moulted their feathers for the last time. Her theatre is so unchanged that a representation might be given in it to-morrow, if the actors could be reanimated; the laws she made for the etiquette of her literary evenings are still suspended in the apartments—they want only a second Catherine to put them again in force; the library, the collection of pictures, the museum, are still there as she left them; nothing is yet injured, only here and there something added. In another year all will be changed, and Catherine's court of love and the Muses transformed into—what?

The great picture collection contains many that are renowned all over the world, and may well enchant the eyes of connoisseurs, particularly those who admire the Netherlands school of painting. On the whole, there are more Dutch cottages such as Ostade painted (offering the strangest contrast to the palace to which they belong) than there are Venetian palaces or Roman churches; more North German cattle pastures than Southern Alps; more unroasted and roasted game than roasted martyrs; more hares

transfixed by the spit of the cook than St. Sebastians by the arrows of the heathen; more dogs, horses, and cows, than priests, prophets, and saintly visions. So numerous are the productions of some of these masters here, that separate halls are devoted to them, and it is scarcely conceivable how enough of their pictures were found for other collections.

The Hermitage is not greatly frequented, as foreigners as well as natives must procure tickets. These are given indeed without difficulty, yet even this little obstacle is sufficient to keep numbers away. Love of ease is, after vanity, the great impulse to all our actions, or at least to all our omissions. There are in St. Petersburg a number of families of the educated classes who have never visited the Hermitage; and how little is gained compared with what might be, even by those who do? When we look at the listless faces of the sight-satiated public lounging past the pictures, we cannot help asking ourselves how so many painters could ever obtain such extraordinary renown. Where is the enthusiasm for their works, the rapture they inspire? For four thousand paintings reflecting half the natural world and half mankind, a two hours' saunter; for thirty thousand engravings, a few minutes; for three rooms full of statues, as many passing looks; for the antiquities of Greece, a couple of "Ah's" and "Oh's;" and for twelve thousand camcos and gems, scarcely a half-opened eye!

The most admired objects here are beyond all doubt the crown jewels, and other valuables arranged in a separate cabinet with them. For, boast as we may of our higher cultivation, the old Adam is so little driven from his kingdom, that we all grasp; like children and savages, more eagerly after what is bright and glittering than after that which breathes life and grace. What is the water of Ruysdael's forest-brooks to the water of the imperial diamonds? all the melting lustre of Carlo Dolce to the lustre of those pearls? What are all the roses, apricots, and juicy pomegranates of Heemskerk to the oriental splendours of the diadem? Cuypp's green meadows seldom touch the heart, but the green of the emerald in yon sceptre fills all hearts with hope and longing.

We human creatures, taken on the whole, are very sensual, rapacious, unrefined beings; and where we see hundreds yawning in the face of Rembrandt's "reverend old man," we scarcely see one so much a philosopher as not to grow more animated when the jewel-keeper grasps his keys and opens that magic cabinet. In fact, it would be hard to find elsewhere so many jewels together. The old connection of Russia with India and Persia has brought a quantity of precious stones into the treasury, and lately her own subject mountains have opened their bosoms, and yielded such treasures, that many a private person might be well contented with what was meant for the imperial little finger alone. Diadems, sceptres, armlets, bracelets, girdles, rings.

and if one dared to pluck a nosegay in this sparkling garden, many would find a few sprigs sufficient to place them above the cares of life.

St. Petersburg has in the Kasan Church a copy of St. Peter's, and the Hermitage has a copy of Raffaele's Loggi. They are executed by the best Italian masters in one of the wings built for the purpose by the celebrated architect Guarenghi. These magnificent pictures they place in a more advantageous light than in Rome itself, and they can be better enjoyed here than there. In the passages of the Loggi are displayed some beautiful models in wax and ivory, partly representations of Russian popular life, which every one interested in the study of Russia will contemplate with delight. Among other things there is an exquisitely wrought settlement of Russian peasants in wax. A wooden dwelling-house shaded by birch-trees is seen on the borders of a brook. A fisherman is sitting by the brook, an old bearded peasant is at work in the yard, his daughter is going to the spring, the old mother is before the door feeding poultry. It is a pity this pretty rustic picture is composed of such perishable materials. The treasures contained in the library of the Hermitage, although they appear in the light of day, are yet more buried and concealed than those of the saloons of art. Among other interesting matters may be seen there the whole legacy of Diderot, and Voltaire's library; the books as he used and abused them, with his marginal notes in pencil, and the thumb-stains and dogs'-ears left by his fingers on the covers.

We have but touched on some of the treasures of this palace, but enough has been said to show that a hermit might boldly renounce the rest of the world if allowed to make his cell here, where half nature and half mankind are offered to his contemplation, on canvass, in colour, in marble, glass, and ivory; painted, chiselled, stamped, woven, and printed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

THE director of the Foundling Hospital of St. Petersburg is a German, from one of the Baltic provinces. Indeed, nearly all the charitable institutions in Russia are presided over by Germans. When I went to pay my respects to him, I found him busily writing in an elegant study; and as his work did not admit of delay, he invited me to sit down till he had finished. There is some interest in examining the study of a man through whose hands there pass annually from six hundred to seven hundred millions of rubles (for that is supposed to be the amount of

revenue belonging to the hospital), and on whose judgment depends, in a great measure, the welfare of nearly thirty thousand human beings; and I was therefore not sorry of the leisure thus afforded me for contemplating the director's birds and flowers; for some notion may be formed of a man's character from an examination of the objects by which he chooses to be habitually surrounded.

At length the director laid his pen aside, and said to me in a friendly tone, "Now, sir, I am at your service. Put what questions you please to me, and then we will go and see whatever you wish to see." And thereupon he proceeded, while walking up and down the room, to inform me of the history, condition, and statistics of the vast institution.

The Vospitatelni Dom, or house of education, of St. Petersburg, is of more recent origin than that of Moscow, of which it was only a dependent branch, when instituted by Catherine in 1770. This new establishment was at first one of very limited extent, containing, in 1790, not more than three hundred children. Since the commencement of the present century, the number has increased with astonishing rapidity, for in 1837 no fewer than twenty-five thousand six hundred of the rising generation were under the direction of this colossal institution. The number of children annually brought in has been continually on the increase. In 1822 the number amounted to upwards of three thousand, from 1830 to 1833 it was between four thousand and five thousand, and from 1834 to 1837 between five thousand and seven thousand.

No condition is annexed to the reception of the children; all are received, and the government has hitherto provided with the utmost liberality for the increasing wants of the hospital. The original endowment of Catherine was insignificant compared to the present wealth of the establishment, which has been enriched by presents from private individuals, and by large gifts from Alexander, Paul, and Nicholas, till it has become one of the wealthiest landed proprietors in Russia, not to speak of some dozens of millions lent out on mortgage. Alexander, moreover, made a gift to the hospital of the monopoly of cards, and of the revenue of the Lombard;\* and the constant cbbing and flowing that goes on in the St. Petersburg purses makes the Lombard a place of very great importance. Thus it is that, in one way or another, the annual revenues of the Foundling Hospital do not fall short of from six hundred to seven hundred millions of rubles, or about twice the amount of the national revenue of Prussia. The annual expenses of the institution are estimated at five millions two hundred thousand rubles, and in 1837 the buildings then in progress for its accommodation were expected to

\* The establishment where money is lent on pledges; an institution which in almost every Continental state is in the hands of the government.

cost two millions. Among others, a neat church was in the course of erection, on which it was intended to expend six hundred thousand rubles.

Within St. Petersburg itself are the principal buildings, where the children are usually kept during the first six weeks, after which they are sent out to nurse among the peasantry within a circuit of about a hundred and thirty versts. When about six years' old, they are taken from their foster-parents, and the girls return to St. Petersburg for their education, while the boys are sent to a branch establishment at Gatchina.

It must not be supposed that the buildings at St. Petersburg have at all the air of a school or hospital: on the contrary, their spaciousness and magnificence give them rather the appearance of palaces. The Vospitatelni Dom, with its courts and gardens, and its dependent buildings, occupies a space of thirty thousand square toises,\* close to the Fontanka, and therefore in the best part of the town. The main building is composed of what were formerly the palaces of Prince Bobrinski and Count Rasumoffski. These were purchased for the institution, but a number of additional buildings were erected, and the whole may now be said to form a little district of its own.

The Vospitatelni Dom of St. Petersburg is much more splendid than that of Moscow. The children are better educated, and for that very reason more easily provided for. Nevertheless, the mortality is much greater than at Moscow, owing partly to the greater poverty of the peasantry around St. Petersburg. Moscow lies in the centre of the most vigorous portion of the Russian population, among whom it is more easy to find good healthy nurses, and people disposed to treat the children well that are confided to them. Around St. Petersburg the bulk of the peasantry are of an Ingrian race; they and their houses are wretched in the extreme, and the population so small as not to average more than seventy to the square mile,† for the whole government of St. Petersburg. Of the children brought into the house, one-fourth die during the first six weeks, at the breasts of the nurses; and of those sent out among the peasants, more than one-half die during the six years, so that at the end of that time scarcely a third of the children brought into the institution remain alive. In the common course of nature, had they remained at the breasts of their mothers, more than half those children would have been alive at the end of the sixth year. It is partly to the enormous distances which the children have to be carried that this mortality must be attributed. Indeed, many of them are all but dead when they arrive. Not merely St. Petersburg and its immediate environs, but one-half of Russia, sends its surplus infantine population

\* More than twenty-eight English acres.

† As the German square mile is equal to 20 English square miles, it follows that the population does not exceed 3½ souls to the English square mile.

to this institution, and the other half deals in the same way towards Moscow. In 1836, on one and the same day, there arrived a child from Kisheneff in Bessarabia, and another from Tobolsk in Siberia—places considerably more than a thousand miles off. How many poor infants may not perish on such journeys before they even reach the Vospitatelni Dom at all!

When their education is complete, the children are relieved from all obligation towards the institution, and are left to devote themselves to such pursuits as they may themselves have selected, or have been prepared for. A large number of the boys are placed in the imperial manufactories of paper, carpets, looking-glasses, &c.; others are put out to merchants, &c.; and those that have shown most talent become artists, priests, and students. The girls, in the same way, according to the abilities they have displayed, are put out as servants, *bonnes*, or governesses; and, as the girls have generally received instruction in French, German, drawing, music, &c. there is always a very great demand for governesses from the Vospitatelni Dom, the more so as the Russians know so little of those prejudices against illegitimate birth which have descended to us from the middle ages, that there is scarcely a word in their language to express the idea. In 1836, thirty-two governesses had been placed in respectable families, and in 1837, the applications were so numerous that it was apprehended not more than half the number required would be forthcoming.

In the institution there are always from six hundred to seven hundred wet-nurses, who are paid at the rate of two hundred and fifty rubles a-year, and have their board, lodging, &c. free. On such terms, there is no doubt an abundant supply of competent individuals may always be had. Of teachers and inspectors, or class ladies, as they are called in Russia, there are from four hundred to five hundred in the house—French, German, and Russian—and their salaries often amount to several thousands. The educational expenses of the institution are alone estimated at more than half a million, that is, including the establishment for Boys at Gatshina. Twelve medical men, mostly Germans, are attached to the establishment, and are bound to pay frequent visits to the infants out at nurse in the country. Then there are cooks, housekeepers, and other servants, some of them pupils of the establishment, though, for many reasons, strangers are always preferred. In the building at St. Petersburg the number of inmates rarely falls short of six thousand.

In immediate connection with this establishment is a lying-in hospital, conducted with the same degree of liberality, all that apply being received gratuitously, while the arrangements are so excellent that women far above the lowest classes frequently avail themselves of it. Women may enter the hospital, if they wish it, a full month before the period at which they expect their confinement, and the utmost secrecy is observed, none but those

connected with the house being permitted to enter it. Even the emperor, when on one occasion he wished to intrude into the place, was stopped, and was prevailed on to respect the asylum. Every other part of the establishment, however, is freely shown, except on Sundays, on which day no strangers are admitted but the friends and relatives of the foundlings; for many parents continue to watch the progress of their infants, even after having committed them to the care of the great house. Not only poor pedestrians and private soldiers may be seen wending their way to the *Vospitatelni Dom* on a Sunday, but ladies richly clad, and gentlemen bedizened with orders, may be seen stepping from their coaches-and-four.

The first place we visited was the lodge where the children are received on their arrival. It is a small, warm room, and the entrance leading to it stands open night and day, all the year round. An inspectress and several servants are at all times in attendance, and a large book lies open, in which the young stranger is forthwith registered. From fifteen to twenty usually arrive in the course of the day, and the only question ever asked is whether the child has been baptized and named. If the answer is in the affirmative, the name is entered on the book; if not, the child is merely numbered and registered accordingly, like a bale of goods. In the dusk of evening it is that the greatest number are usually brought in. In fine weather there are more arrivals than in bad, and in summer more than in winter. When we entered the room it was about one o'clock, and down to that hour the day had already increased the great family by seven, whom we found entered in the book under the numbers of 2,310—2,317. Sometimes, when the mother unwinds the cloth, she will find her infant already dead, in which case it is not received, but the fact is notified to the police.

When the poor mother, oft amid sobs and tears, has imprinted her last kiss upon her infant, the latter is conveyed to the chapel, to be immediately received into the bosom of the orthodox Greek Church, and pious ceremonies of interminable length salute the newly-arrived. Many die in the hands of the priests, and some on their way from the receiving lodge to the chapel, in which case there remain but two documents to tell the melancholy tale. In one book will perhaps be the following entry:—"No. 4,512.—A child three weeks old. A girl. Received 6th April, 8 A.M." The corresponding entry then, in another book, will be:—"No. 4,512. Died 6th April, 9 A.M. Handed to the gravedigger to be buried." Those that come alive out of the chapel are examined by the medical attendant, and, if found healthy, are delivered into the care of the inspectress of wet-nurses, who delivers for each a certificate, something like the following:—"No. 4,518. Boy. Baptized Ivan Petrovitch. Received 10th May, 10 A.M. Healthy. Placed among the infants at the breast."

The wards for the sucklings are spacious, warm, well-lighted,

and handsomely fitted up. In the ante-rooms are baths, constantly kept full of warm water, in which the children are frequently washed. The nurses are all neatly dressed in the Russian national costume. Sometimes the mothers will apply to be appointed nurses to their own children; a wish that is generally complied with, when no reason to the contrary presents itself. To prevent the nurses from changing the children confided to them, the cradles are placed alternately, first a boy and then a girl, and then the beds of the nurses two-and-two, in such a manner that between two infants of the same sex there must always intervene two nurses and another infant. In each ward there are from forty to fifty beds; and on the occasion of my visit there were six hundred and fifty sucklings, and an equal number of wet-nurses, in the house.

Four or five deaths occur daily in the Vospitatelni Dom, or from fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred yearly.\* A section of the cemetery of Okhta is set apart for the foundlings. They are usually buried several at a time, those that have died during two or three successive days being committed to the earth at one and the same time. In that cemetery it is supposed thirty thousand of these children have already been deposited.

In the infirmary we found one hundred and fifty patients. Three of the little sufferers had that morning closed their eyes for ever. Their bodies were laid out in a separate room, on small beds which had been neatly decorated according to the prescribed form; but no mother's eye was there to shed a tear upon the deceased. For my own part, however, the dead bodies laid out in that room produced a less melancholy effect upon me than the cradles intended for the living in the receiving lodge.

We next proceeded to that part of the building which was set apart for the girls who had returned from the country. I do not recollect how many hundred girls, from six years old to eighteen, were at the period of my visit in that part of the establishment; but I was astonished at the order and cleanliness of the rooms, the excellent arrangement of the school-rooms and dormitories, and the neat appearance of the pupils themselves. Everything about the place, compared with all similar establishments that I had seen in other countries, was really magnificent. The expression is not too strong.

It was just dinner-time when we entered the dining-room. Long tables, in three rows, were neatly laid out, and long rows of the elder girls marched in from different sides, in double files, led by their governesses and inspectresses. Hundreds, however, came running in from the garden, or skipping down the stairs; they were differently clad, according to their several classes.

\* This refers only to the house in St. Petersburg. Including the boys' house and the children out in the country, the annual deaths average from two thousand four hundred to three thousand.



Some were in red, others in blue, yellow, brown, &c. but all were clean, and their hair either laid smoothly over the forehead or prettily braided. There was an air of health and cheerfulness about them all; and the sight of so many pretty girls all at once was quite bewitching. The director was standing by the side of me, and each of the children in passing saluted him in the most unconstrained manner with a "Good day, papa," in Russian, French, and German.

Gradually all had arranged themselves at their respective tables, and a moment of complete silence followed, after which there arose a hymn of praise to the Creator, who feeds the doves and the motherless. The singing in the Russian churches is at all times imposing; but to hear a hymn sung to a Russian sacred melody, by at least a thousand female voices, had in it something so irresistibly affecting that nothing remained for the wayward heart but to yield to the general movement, to join in the act of praise, and leave a free course to tears.

After this pious exercise all sat down, and a lively buzz of conversation, accompanied by a brisk clattering of spoons, spread quickly through the hall. I was invited to taste the cheer. It happened to be a fast-day, and the Russian viands on those occasions are little calculated to flatter a German palate; still I found all as good and savoury as fish, oil, turnips, and kapusta could well be made on such a day. Gigantic boilers and tureens rose by some invisible machinery from the kitchen below, and their contents were rapidly distributed among the plates, and found their way no less rapidly between the talkative lips for which they were intended.

After the spectacle of the wards for sucklings, the great dining-room was a relief and consolation. I felt thankful to God for those who were now old enough to help themselves to their food; but it was melancholy to think that for each little head in that room three sisters reposed in the cold church-yard.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE EXCHANGE.

THE Germans have corrupted a word of Latin origin into *Börse*; the Russians have adopted it from the Germans, and *Russianized* it into *Birsha*; but this name is bestowed upon every place where persons regularly meet for any object—among others, to the places where the *isvoshtshiks* stand while waiting for employment. In St. Petersburg, it is therefore not enough to direct your sledge-driver to the "*Birsha*" (Exchange); you must say the Dutch Exchange, for so the magnificent building on Vassili Ostrof, where

the merchants assemble, is called by the lower class of Russians, probably from the circumstance of the Dutch merchants, who were invited to St. Petersburg by Peter the Great, having had the first settlement, where now the representatives of every maritime nation are to be found.

The Exchange of St. Petersburg is more favourably situated than many great public buildings. It stands on the extreme point of the Vassili Ostrof, with a noble open space before it, and is reared on elevated foundations. On either side the superb granite quays, that give solidity to the point of the island, divide the majestic river into two mighty arms, in which it flows in calm power to the right and left. Stately flights of granite steps lead down to the river. On the space before the building two massive "columnæ rostratæ," above a hundred feet in height, and decorated with the prows of ships cast in metal, have been erected to the honour of Mercury. These columns are hollow; and on the summits, which are reached by a flight of iron steps, are gigantic vases that are filled with combustibles on all occasions of public illumination. The erection of the whole, including the quays, occupied nearly twelve years, from 1804 to 1816: a most unheard-of period in St. Petersburg, where a copy of St. Peter's at Rome was "got up" in two years, and a new imperial palace rose from its ashes in eleven months. The great hall, of colossal proportions, is lighted from above. At either end, and on both sides, are spaces in the form of arcades: in one of the first stands an altar, with lamps constantly burning, for the benefit of the pious Russian merchants, who always bow to the altar, and sometimes even prostrate themselves, on their entrance, to implore the favour of all the saints to their undertakings. The blue or green modern frock-coats of the worshippers form as curious a contrast with their long patriarchal beards as the altar itself, with its steps covered with an elegant Parisian carpet, and its hideous, age-blackened image of a saint, which none would venture to modernize any more than they would attempt to put the razor to the Russian mercantile chin.

Among the foreigners forming part of the mercantile body the Germans are the most important, from their great numbers and the amount of business carried on by them. The Vassili Ostrof, where they have whole lines of fine houses, and where almost every house of public entertainment and every shop has a German name over it, may be looked upon as a commercial colony of Germany. The first houses in St. Petersburg are English or German; the second rank is composed almost exclusively of the latter; some of them date their establishment from the infancy of the city. The tone of society in these houses is extremely agreeable. Without losing their nationality, the Germans have not disdained so much as the English to mingle with the Russians; and their solidity of character and mental cultivation show to great advantage, in a setting of Russian suppleness of demeanour

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northern hospitality. The English form a colony apart yet than the Germans, who have many Russian subjects among their body, while the former remain always the "foreign guests," who in time of peace share the privileges of the natives without partaking of their burdens. They call their body the St. Petersburg Factory. They have their own church, and live secluded among themselves, despising all other nations, and more particularly their hosts, the Russians; drive English equipages; hunt the bear on the shores of the Neva, as they do the tiger on those of the Ganges; decline taking their hats off to the emperor; and, looking down on all men, boast of their own indispensableness and their invincible fleets. They are, however, held in high consideration by the government and every one else, perhaps because they esteem themselves so highly. The English inhabit chiefly the magnificent quay that bears their name, where, however, many opulent Russians also possess handsome houses.

Besides the English and Germans, who are in possession of the maritime commerce of St. Petersburg, every nation in Europe has its consul and representatives. London excepted, there is, perhaps, no other city in Europe in which all other nations have so great a commercial interest as in St. Petersburg. No Russian, either in St. Petersburg or any other part of the empire, engages in maritime trade; he has neither the knowledge nor the connections necessary thereto, still less the true commercial spirit of enterprise. The narrow, un-ideal nature of the Russian cannot free itself from its false estimation of the value of money, nor rise to an elevated view of the wants and nature of the times. Money is not, in his eyes, an instrument for the increase of credit and extension of the sphere of operation; the shining metal itself is the one and only object: he can rarely prevail on himself to part with the money once clutched, or incur voluntarily a small loss to ward off a greater. The Russian merchant must in every commercial undertaking grasp an immediate profit, be it ever so small, and will certainly never imitate that American owner of a steam-boat who carried passengers in his vessel for a year together for *nothing*, in order to drive his rivals out of the field. He does not understand the German saying, "Gain time and gain all," still less the English merchant's proverb, "Time is money;" but rather, like the Arabian merchant described by Buckhardt, the Russian will let years pass away in the hope of avoiding a temporary loss, without once calculating how much the delay eats into his capital by keeping it idle. In spite, however, of their false commercial system, the great mass of the worshippers in the temple of the Russian Plutus are wealthy; and, with all their fondness for money, no people bear commercial losses so easily as the Russians. Such a thing as suicide in consequence of failure in trade is never heard of among them: an occurrence but too common among us. This seeming contradiction is to be explained partly by the light temperament of the Russian, and

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partly by the fact that no Russian merchant considers his honor as a merchant, or his credit as a citizen, at all affected by his failure, simply because such things have no existence for him. "Bay s'nim!" (God be with it!) he says to his faithless treasure, and begins anew the erection of his card edifice.

The centre on which the Exchange of St. Petersburg moves, the sun that makes the weather, the spring that gives life and motion to all, is an offshoot of that remarkable race from which for so many centuries the hierarchy of Mammon have had their origin. Baron S——, who in St. Petersburg electrifies the *nerf des nerf*, is the Rothschild of Russia, without whose co-operation scarcely any great undertaking can have a beginning. The learned in these matters estimate the value of the light absorbed by this diamond at from forty to fifty millions. His capital employed in commerce by sea amounts to not less than thirty or thirty-five millions yearly. Immense sums have been expended by him in the purchase of estates in all parts of Russia, from the capital to the Black Sea. His small bright eye, compared with the Napoleon figure, and old green great-coat, are to be seen in the centre of that system round which revolve the lesser planets in the shape of English, German, and French merchants.

The commercial body of St. Petersburg is certainly the most numerous society of respectable and well-informed persons to be met with in Russia, without an order or a knightly cross on their breasts. Except the silver tokens worn by the sworn brokers, and some medals, a good pound in weight, carried round the necks of some native merchants, nothing is to be seen but plain coats of black or green; and the contrast between this unpretending uniformity of appearance and the gorgeous uniforms of the Russian generals and courtiers, of the academicians and professors, whose gold-embroidered coats glitter with more testimonials of their abundant and superabundant merits than there are Alphas and Betas in Orion, is singular enough; whether pleasing or displeasing depends upon taste.

The assembly is met by no means in all its elements "gentlemanlike," and where an Englishman may feel much silent disgust at the obtrusive Polish Jew, Tartar, or Bokharian, is in the highest degree interesting to one who knows the interior of the country, and can rightly interpret the dumb pantomime, or listen to the long echo that a few words spoken in this hall find in the vast countries lying beyond. The broker notes down with a pencil some thousand cwts. of tallow; on either side a nod is given, and sentence of death has gone forth against hundreds of oxen, grazing in unconscious innocence in their far fatherland. What writing and talking, what hallooing to herdsmen, what toil and trouble, what a waste of breath and sweat of brow, what scenes of blood and slaughter, will have resulted from that simple nod, before the doomed fat can have found its way to the Neva, and thence, through the eastern, western, and northern seas to

London; till at last, in Dublin or Glasgow, or heaven knows what other corner of the earth, the order is given to John to bring in the candles, when the product of this thousand-fold turmoil wastes away in the all-dissolving element!

"Gospodin Muller and Co. don't you want some of my ship timber? I think you will be satisfied with what I can offer you," says a long-bearded caftan to a German great-coat with both hands in its pockets. "We will try you, Gospodin Paulow. Note down for me twelve hundred mast timbers first size, six thousand yards, and three thousand score of oak planks, one and a half feet broad and two inches thick," answers Muller and Co. without a thought of the myriads of wood-pigeons and owls which his reckless commission has driven forth nestless to the four winds of heaven; of the chorus of hamadryads groaning under the strokes of the pitiless axes of the ruthless peasants of Vologda and Viatka. In his inveterately prosaic fancy, does he never dream of the desolation that a few days will cause in those primeval forests, or among the fauns and sylphs who have rejoiced for ages in their shades? Muller and Co. know and care nothing about it. In a year and a half (for so long it must be before the mighty trees, which the merchant's word of power has uprooted from their native soil, will find their way through the watery veins of interior Russia), the timber will appear on the Neva: so much will then be put down to the credit, so much to the debit side of the account; due notice will be sent of its arrival in London; and little reck Muller and Co. what flag shall dare the breeze from those lofty masts, what seas shall be traversed by that timber, what rock shall rend its strong sides asunder, or in what unknown depths of the Antarctic Sea it shall slowly decompose. The hall of the St. Petersburg Exchange is so large that the music of all the regiments of guards might conveniently find an echo there; but it is built for whispers only. What is spoken aloud are trifles: "How is your lady?" "We had a charming day on the Neva!" "A.'s is a good place to dine at." "I think it is more comfortable at B.'s;" &c. But when a few heads are seen close together, speaking piano, pianissimo, and fencing off the circle so closely with their backs that a mouse could not make its way through, something more important is going on. "It is too much: three thousand"—"four—five"—"twenty—a hundred thousand"—"October," "November," "London," "Hull," "Baltimore"—"Well, I'll take it"—"It's a bargain, Mr. Curtius."

Mr. Curtius has sold six hundred lasts of the finest Tula wheat, two hundred lasts of the best linseed, three hundred stones of Livonian flax, to Mr. O'Higgins. Those six hundreds lasts of wheat have imposed heavy burdens upon as many peasant families. With the argument of the stick, many a poor Russian was driven to the field on account of that wheat; and many of the hardy little race of horses, so numerous in the north, have sunk at last under the burden of hard work and harder blows. In

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harvest time all hands were at work day and night—mother and children, girls and boys; the infants screamed unheeded in the damp grass, the sick sighed untended in their huts. All this is nothing to O'Higgins and Curtius, who, leaving the hard-hearted landowners to make up their account with Heaven, are bent only on making up their own with their correspondents in London, where there are always more hungry people than in all Russia taken together; and so at last the crust of bread finds its way to the mouth of the English beggar, who, as he eats it, might thus soliloquise: "If our lordly landholders were not so marble-hearted, and if the St. Petersburg merchant did not require so large a profit for his daughters' equipage and his own wine-cellar, my crust would be a little larger."

Besides bread for the English, wool for the Dutch, tallow for the Scotch, flax and hemp are the two most important articles on the Exchange of St. Petersburg; and yet more is shipped from Riga, whose Dwina passes through the very centre of the flax-producing countries. The ropes and cords shipped from St. Petersburg are to be found in the smallest shop of the smallest town in Germany. It may be literally asserted that half Europe lies in Russian bonds. A third part of all European chains are forged from Russian iron, from the enormous possessions of the Demidoffs, Jakowleffs, and other Russian grandees, who are masters of whole branches of the Ural Mountains. The value of the export of this bulky article amounts, on an average, to one hundred and fifty millions of rubles yearly. The tallow makes about a third of the export. After tallow come linen, linseed, hemp, and cordage, about a fifth; corn as much; iron and copper, about a tenth; hides, a twentieth; wood, not much less; and potash and oil in considerable fractions.

The value of foreign merchandise brought to St. Petersburg, in from fifteen hundred to seventeen hundred vessels (half of them English), surpasses that of the native goods destined for exportation by thirty to forty millions. This relation of the imports to the exports is correct only in reference to St. Petersburg, as all other Russian ports export incomparably more than they import. Among the chief articles of import are sugar and English cotton goods, these two articles forming nearly one-half; the next in amount is champagne, of which a larger quantity circulates through Russian veins than through those of any other people.\* St. Petersburg, and that half of the empire which the capital supplies, do not consume as much coffee as the kingdom of Bavaria alone. Tea has almost superseded it. Tobacco is imported to the amount of eight millions, silk four millions, fruit two millions, cheese one million. Many of these articles may appear insignificant in amount, considering the extent of country

\* Yearly, about six hundred thousand bottles, which in Russia are sold for nine millions of rubles.

furnished with them from the capital, an extent comprising one-half of the empire; but it is exceedingly large, when we consider that they are destined for the consumption of a few hundred thousand of the opulent classes, who alone enjoy these articles of luxury. On an average, these imports pay thirty-three per cent. duty, a third of the whole value.

There can be no question but that, if this third, in the shape of duty, were done away with, the trade would be double or triple what it now is. A man in moderate circumstances would live three times as cheap as he does now, millions more would be enabled to partake of those foreign comforts of life, and the raw produce of Russia would be much cheaper, and exported in much greater quantities than it now is. Agriculture, the breeding of cattle, and the growth of timber, would improve the population; the income of the private man would increase, the powers of the soil be augmented, roads and canals would become better, the land would rise in value, the enormous estates would be divided, and even the treasury of the emperor would gain in the end, though it might suffer a little at first.

The unnatural and costly manufactures, which after all are most imperfect in their results, would be given up, and the energies of the people would naturally direct themselves to the improvement of those branches of industry suited to them, and to the circumstances of the country.

The whole trade of St. Petersburg with foreign countries employs a yearly capital of about three hundred millions. About seventy-five or eighty millions may be reckoned to the account of the "foreign guests" (*innostranniye gostui*), and the rest (two hundred and twenty millions) to the natives, or subjects of the empire (Russian, German, French, Swedish, &c. &c.) There are several houses in St. Petersburg which turn yearly a capital of from ten to twenty millions, or about one-third of the whole trade of Riga.\* Commerce has increased amazingly in activity during this century, in spite of the oppressive burden of the customs.†

The most active agents between the Neva and foreign lands, during the first half of the last century, were the Dutch; since that time the English. The first ship that entered the port of St. Petersburg was from Holland, the same on board of which Peter the Great studied navigation. It was received with extraordinary marks of honour, and had the privilege conferred on it of bringing whatever cargo it carried, duty free, into the empire.

\* There are about one hundred and fifty wholesale houses trading beyond sea in St. Petersburg: twenty or twenty-four English, five French, one Spanish, and nearly one hundred German. "The English have the compactest, most solid, and prettiest business," as a merchant once observed to me.

† At the close of the last century, from eight hundred to nine hundred vessels entered the port of St. Petersburg yearly. At present nearly two thousand is the number.

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This privilege ceased at the end of the last century, as it was longer possible to render the old ship sea-worthy. The first vessel that enters in May, like the swallow announcing spring, after a seven months' winter, is still received with great tokens of joy, and is much favoured. From the first year of its existence till 1720, St. Petersburg saw only twelve to fifty ships yearly; from 1720 to 1730, from one hundred to two hundred and fifty; from 1730 to 1750, three hundred to four hundred on an average; and this century, two thousand. The ukase of Peter the Great, forbidding importation for the interior through Archangel, and another commanding every merchant to ship a third of his merchandise for exportation from the Neva, have not alone contributed to this rapid advance: a glance at the geographical position of St. Petersburg will convince every one that it must, sooner or later, have obtained for itself all the advantages that these ukases were intended to confer on it.

The Custom-house, at whose quay all vessels not drawing more than nine feet water can conveniently land their cargoes, is to the west of the Exchange, on the lesser Neva, and close to it are enormous magazines, crowded with every species of property. Directly behind the Exchange is a large open space fenced with iron railing, where, the whole year through, and exposed to all changes of the atmosphere, immense quantities of merchandise, even of a kind very liable to injury, such as sugar, are kept in the open air. Throughout all Russia, even in Riga, in the midst of the market-places, we find such rough deposits of wares. The custom probably obtained from the coarse nature of the chief articles of Russian exportation, timber, hides, tallow, leather, &c. for which a mat or a tarred cloth was always a sufficient protection. Here are often to be seen in one yard, under such tarpawlings, and kept from the bare earth merely by planks, copper, lead, iron, sugar, wine, &c. for months together, exposed to snow, rain, and sunshine; lead enough to kill all the crows in the world, if a three-pounder were wanted for every one of them; sugar enough to sweeten the Lake of Ladoga; spice and incense to embalm the whole empire; and the choicest woods of Brazil and the West Indies.

In spring, when the navigation is just opened, a fair of a very peculiar kind is held in the place behind the Exchange; and hither, to the considerable profit of many a seaman and trader, throng all classes of society in St. Petersburg, to enjoy a long-looked-for pleasure. Here are displayed such foreign productions as are held too insignificant to become regular articles of commerce, and which fall to the lot of the ship's captain and crew. Parroquets and other rare birds, monkeys, baboons, and such like animals, sometimes kept as pets in great houses, splendidly coloured plants from the tropical climates, scream, chatter, and flare together. Here are to be found rare shells for the curious in conchology, strange-looking utensils and garments from savage



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tries; and sometimes a ship-master may be seen leading about a negro boy to dispose of, if not exactly as a slave, at least to make a profit of his services, in the house of some person of consequence. After the dead, silent, colourless winter, there is an extraordinary charm in this noisy, gaudy tumult, the first gift of foreign shores to the far northern city. It is like a "hansel" to a trader commencing business, and the wares go off merrily, particularly the screaming and grimacing portion of them.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### INDUSTRY.

WE have before remarked that in Russia all foreign produce is for the most part vended by foreigners; and that the trade in the arts and manufactures of Western Europe is completely separate from the properly Russian and oriental traffic. St. Petersburg is, from its position and its privileges, almost the only port which supplies Russia with jewellery, watches, wines, cloths, laces, silk wares, cotton, &c. Hence there are in St. Petersburg astounding quantities of such articles, and great magazines are formed, which are either really the parent stocks of like establishments in the provincial cities, or are at least the cause of their existence; the dealers, mean while, form regular colonies of foreign artisans, foreign artists, or traffickers in the productions of foreign art throughout the whole empire; that is to say, through half Europe and half Asia. From this peculiarity of position, these foreign traders must be regarded not merely as traders, but as in a high degree the servants of civilization, and as such, they enter a society to which they could have no pretension elsewhere; and possessing thus a weight and influence they could not otherwise lay claim to, they deserve in a particular manner the notice of the traveller.

According to the views of the ordinary Russian, the whole European world is divided into two parts: into "Nashe Storona" (our side) and "Vashe Storona" (your side), under which latter denomination he includes all Europe that is not Russian.\*

This other half of Europe he also calls "the foreign land," and has a general idea that all within it is of a superior kind, the people particularly excellent, nature extraordinarily beautiful, the productions of art and industry irreproachable. Thence come those "innostranzi," or foreigners, those wise people, who understand everything better than he does, and from whom he learns so much.

\* In this sense, a Russian, speaking of a certain professor, a native of Hungary, said to me, "You must know him very well; he is from your side."

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These *innostranzi*, whose first appearance by no means dates from Peter I. but who had settlements in different cities of the empire centuries before his time, were always a privileged race, if not by imperial ordinance, as they have been since John Basilovitch, yet by their own superiority. Their freedom dates mostly from Peter the Great and Catherine; and although some attempts have been made since to limit it, yet it may be asserted on the whole, that they enjoy all the privileges of the subject, without sharing his burdens. Without paying taxes, without furnishing recruits, not subject to any guild or corporation, they may work and trade freely from city to city, throughout the whole empire. In our German cities the poor foreigner finds himself horribly restricted in comparison with the native, we may almost say persecuted and oppressed: whilst in Russia it is the foreigner whose privileges are to be envied. Not only private persons, but the authorities, when it is said of any one "*on innostranez*" (he is a foreigner), think themselves bound to greater civility of demeanour.

"*Ya innostranez* (I am a foreigner); off with your hat, Russian!" says the German; and "I beg your pardon, honourable sir," answers the Russian, and takes his hat off. It is natural enough that an "*innostranez*" should seek to retain, as long as possible, a predicate which entitles him to such distinctions. The Russian as naturally seeks to incorporate the *innostranzi* with the subjects of the empire. Now and then there appears an edict that all foreigners who have been settled for a certain period in any part of the empire, shall without ceremony swear allegiance to the Russian flag, which puts them all in a fright. As a merchant or an artisan who has not obtained any particular rank ("*tshin*"), by any service to the state, could not register himself in any other class than that of merchant or citizen, and as such would be liable to military service, the discipline of the stick, and other pleasures of the same kind, every device of course is tried to avoid the sentence. On the appearance of such edicts, some leave the empire for a time, and come back with new passports as newly-arrived foreigners; others contrive to procure these passports without leaving the country, or slip through in some other way, and so manage to transmit their privileges to their children, who are also registered as foreigners.

An "*innostranez*," if he be only in some degree a man "*comme il faut*;" if he can lay aside his German bashfulness, dress well, play at cards, talk nonsense in the right tone, or make a fool of himself in any other decent fashion, may reckon upon being half classed among the nobles throughout Russia, and invited to parties from which in any other country his calling would exclude him. In the interior it is not uncommon to meet the German apothecary's assistants among the dancers at the balls and assemblies of the nobility; and even in St. Petersburg it happens sometimes that a foreign knight of the yard may lead out his partner

he dance in the very same gown which he himself measured for her some days before. It would be strange if these people did not assume a little upon the strength of these advantages. They drive out with as many horses as the law allows, furnish their cellars with champagne, give balls and card parties which are graced by the presence of court and state councillors; their daughters aim at the epaulets of colonels and major-generals, and their sons sigh for the daughters of officials and landed proprietors.

Formerly all productions of foreign art or invention were imported; in later years the extraordinary dexterity of the Russian of the lower class, and the very moderate price of his services, have induced the establishment of many Russian manufactures, which the government has sought to protect by many severe prohibitive measures against foreign productions. These new branches of activity are partly the work of foreigners settled in Russia, and favoured by the government, partly of the great landowners, and partly of the immediate influence of the crown.

The landholders have thus turned to account their large unemployed capital of money—and *serfs*, and established manufactories on their own ground, under the management of their own slaves. Many branches of industry have become so much practised in the villages of the greater landholders, that many merely corn-producing hamlets have been changed into large manufactories. Some of the peasants, not content to work only in their lord's manufactory, carry on spinning, weaving, grinding, and pressing on their own account, and have thus grown into persons of property. The well-known iron-forging villages belonging to the family of Shchremetieff, where some of the artisan peasants have become millionaires, are not alone in this respect. All the fairs and markets of interior Russia are flooded with paper, iron goods, cups, teapots, &c. of the Demidoffs, Jakowsleffs, Karpzoffs, &c. The wares are, however, below mediocrity in quality, although in outward appearance, particularly where show and gilding are required, they are close imitations of foreign workmanship. Those who understand the articles know these Russo-European manufactures at once by their plausible exterior, coupled with their utter worthlessness in essential points. Their imitation of oriental workmanship, on the other hand, is extraordinarily good of its kind.

These mighty, influential manufacturing aristocrats are in many cases the great obstacles to the improvement of the manufactures by means of smaller but more skilful producers, who are now quite shut out from competition by the privileged monopolists. In this respect the Russian aristocracy stand in the same relation to the manufacturing industry as the English aristocracy do to the agricultural. In England, where the importation of raw produce is so greatly needed, the sole proprietorship of the soil by the powerful aristocracy not only makes bread dear, but pre-

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vents the improvement of agriculture. In Russia, where there is a superfluity of raw produce, but a want of manufactures, the aristocracy, manufacturing for themselves, have demanded a high tax on the foreign article; and partly because their social position gives them a natural preponderance, partly because, for the advancement of some particular branch of industry, they unite to obtain monopolies from their government, a bar is placed to the invention and acquisition of the other classes, who moreover must pay much dearer for the necessary manufactures on that very account.

St. Petersburg reckons within its walls and in its neighbourhood the largest and most magnificent industrial establishments, particularly those which produce the more unusual and costly articles, and the workmanship is infinitely superior to anything that has hitherto been produced in other parts of Russia. Among them may be enumerated the cotton-spinning, cotton-printing, dyeing, glass and looking-glass manufactories, the cannon foundries, the Gobelin tapestry establishment, and those for cutting and polishing precious stones, paper, and fire-arms. All these are the property either of foreigners or of the crown, under the management of foreigners, and serve as patterns and examples to the whole empire.

All these establishments are readily shown to strangers; partly because, as they are only imitations of what has long been known in other countries, they contain no mystery, and partly because Russian hospitality does not readily allow them to refuse the request of a foreigner. Hence many a thing, in this distant region, becomes known to the curious stranger, that has been churlishly hidden from him in his native land.

It is characteristic of Russia, which possessed universities before it had schools, that establishments for the manufacture of costly carpets should be thought of before they had learned to spin cotton. The "Spalernoi manufactory," where the Gobelin tapestry is made, is the oldest in St. Petersburg, as the academy founded by Peter the First is the oldest school. In Peter's time, the workmen were one and all French and Italians. Within the last fifty years they have been all Russians, the director, of course, excepted, who is an Italian, and the designer, a Frenchman. The establishment is recruited from the great Foundling Hospital, which gives yearly a certain number of boys, who are taught weaving and drawing in the house, and gradually work themselves up to sub-masters and masters.

Ordinary carpets are made here for sale, but the real Gobelin tapestry is destined for the court alone. The opulence of the Russian court in palaces creates a constant demand for these productions, which are also often sent as presents to Asiatic and European potentates. In 1836 there were in the manufactory twenty-four masters and under-masters, fifty-two workmen, and as many apprentices; it is, perhaps, the largest existing estab-

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ment for this branch of industry, which is now rather out of fashion in other parts of the world.

The little boys work at high frames, first at leaves and flowers one colour; then they advance to shaded and veined leaves with several colours; then to stars, arabesques, and so on. Their work is one of the most tedious in the world. The drawings are placed directly behind perpendicular threads, and while the outline of the picture is traced with a black coal, it is transferred to the threads, and the limits of the different tints marked out. Every three or four weeks, papers are fastened over the web, and as it is finished it is rolled up, that it may not be injured during the tedious process of manufacture. We saw several magnificent pictures finished: among others, Peter the Great and his consort, like oil paintings in gold frames; on Catherine's, which was valued at six thousand rubles, were the words, "Natshatoye sobershayet" (They begun—she completed). The workmanship of the precious stones in the crown and sceptre of the empress was perfect; it was wonderful to see how exactly the soft, lustrous gleam of the pearls, the splendour of the gold, and the fire of the precious stones, were represented in coloured threads. Here and there, for the high lights, silk had been introduced; and then again, to render the soft vanishing of the tints, the wool was scraped; and a downy, velvet-like surface given to the web. It is certain that with this kind of pictorial representation effects may be produced beyond the power of the brush, either in oil or water-colours. This was particularly remarkable in a great picture representing the well-known incident of Peter the Great overtaken by a storm on the Lake of Ladoga, and bidding the steersman "trust in God and him." The force of the dark colours, the fulness of light and shade, the tone and power of the whole, are astonishing. Another picture was a copy of one in the Hermitage, "Alexander the Great in the Tent of Darius's Mother;" and a smaller one, after Gerard Dow, displayed the capabilities of this art in the cabinet and miniature style. In these, silk, flax, and wool were employed; the brightness of the silk, the neutral effects of the flax, and the power of the wool, all rendered their several services. This woven painting, if not so enduring, is much richer than mosaic, which it resembles more nearly than it does anything else.

The Petersburgers carry the use of looking-glasses to a high pitch of luxury. The houses and their colossal windows, that make them look like crystal palaces, have been before mentioned. In garden pavilions, a whole wall is sometimes composed of glass, behind which the ladies sit like so many Princesses Snow-drop in the fairy tale. In private houses the bare walls are likewise covered with enormous looking-glasses instead of pictures, as with us: presenting at every turn the picture most admired by many, that of their own persons. The greater part, or rather all, of these glasses, come from the imperial manufactory, which is also

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a manufactory for cutting and blowing glass. It is situate, with its extensive supplementary buildings, and villages for the workmen belonging to it, in the neighbourhood of the Alexander Nevsky cloister. In the magazines of the factory there are stores of looking-glasses of various magnitudes, such as are hardly to be met with elsewhere; among them, not as anything unusual, but as glasses for ordinary sale, are some eight feet wide, fifteen feet long, and an inch and a-half thick. Venus and Diana, with their retinue, had they not the clear brooks and smooth lakes of Greece, might envy the St. Petersburg beauties. The manufactory itself, however, as well as its productions, is to be looked upon more as an article of luxury than as the milch cow that a manufactory ought to be, for so many failures occur among these gigantic fragilities that the profit on them can be but small. More is probably gained on the smaller articles; such as the very curiously cut glass eggs which are used as Easter presents, and the "narghiles" (water vases) through which the Eastern smoker loves to cool the fumes of his tobacco. Of these the Persians sometimes purchase to the amount of fifty thousand rubles and more. These fragile wares have (by-the-way) to be transported *by land* from five to six hundred (German) miles, which could not take place anywhere but in transport-loving Russia.

The glass-cutting department is perhaps the largest in the world; there are not fewer than three hundred workmen employed in this screeching, scratching, crushing, cracking, crashing, detestable labour. If the torture to which the ears of the workmen are subjected, the whole day long, does not totally deaden them to all harmony, a song, after their work is over, must be a heavenly enjoyment. It is singular enough that this manufactory should excel less in the fineness and accuracy of the cutting than in the boldness and dexterity with which castings on a large scale are executed. Much work is done here for the Russian churches, in which balustrades and frameworks of glass are greatly in fashion.

The following anecdote of the inventive spirit of a Russian was related to me:—

The emperor wished to illuminate the Alexander column in a grand style; the size of the round lamps was indicated, and the glasses bespoke at this manufactory, where the workmen exerted themselves in vain, and almost blew the breath out of their bodies in the endeavour to obtain the desired magnitude. The commission must be executed, that was self-evident; but how? A great premium was offered to whoever should solve this problem. Again the human bellows toiled and puffed; their object seemed unattainable; when at last a long-bearded Russian stepped forward, and declared that he could do it. He had strong and sound lungs; he would only rinse his mouth first with a little cold water to refresh them. He applied his mouth to the pipe, and puffed to such purpose that the vitreous ball swelled and

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swaid nearly to the required dimensions, up to it, beyond it. "And, hold!" cried the lookers on; "you are doing too much, how did you do it at all?" "The matter is simple enough," answered the long-beard; "but first, where is my premium?" And when he had clutched the promised bounty he explained. He had retained some of the water in his mouth, which had passed thence into the glowing ball, and, there becoming steam, had rendered him this good service.

It is a known fact, that some of the transplanted branches of industry have attained a higher degree of perfection in Russia than in the country whence they were brought. Sealing-wax is one of these, which can nowhere out of England be obtained better than in Russia. The same may perhaps be said of the paper from the Peterhof manufactory.

When the Emperor Alexander was in England in 1815, he invited English paper manufacturers to Russia, who formed this establishment, for which they brought the necessary machinery from their own country. Not less than seventy thousand reams of paper, of all sorts, the finer particularly, are made here yearly. The coarser kinds are abundantly furnished by the inland manufactories. All the most delicate and daintiest materials that lovers or ladies can desire, whereon to waft their compliments and sighs, are here to be had in abundance and in immense variety.

The Russians greatly esteem an elegant handwriting, and like to have paper and envelope worthy of it. The queer-shaped, scrawled, and smeared epistles that sometimes pass through the German post are never seen in the hands of a Russian. The workmen, eight hundred in number, are supplied from the Foundling Hospital, all dressed in snow-white, like so many cooks, with paper caps of their own fancy on their heads. The execution of the English machines is like witchcraft; thrown in at one side a slimy chaos, the matter comes out firm and perfect paper at the other. We were told in the manufactory that Russia had already been able to acknowledge her obligations to England, by sending thither no small quantity of paper. It is also sent to America.

Under the same roof with the paper manufactory is the imperial establishment for the cutting and polishing of precious stones. The wealth of the Ural and Altai Mountains in these costly articles, and the active search for them, are likely to increase the amount of labour performed in this establishment. In no court in the world are such quantities of jewels employed as in the Russian. The number of orders and crosses worn on the uniforms of the nobles leads already to an enormous consumption. Still greater is that caused by the rings, bracelets, and other ornaments lavished as marks of imperial favour. The emperor and empress scarcely go anywhere without leaving behind them some testimonies of satisfaction in the shape of

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jewels; reversing the Eastern custom, where the smaller pay this homage to the greater luminary. When they travel in a jewel casket, destined for this purpose, and which rarely comes back unemptied, is uniformly among their baggage. If these were always faithfully preserved, and not turned into money again, as they generally are, all the diamond mines of Brazil and the East would not be able to supply the constant demand.

The most beautiful and the most peculiar objects here produced, however, are the large and magnificent malachite vases, the material for which is yielded by Siberia. Nowhere else is this beautiful substance found in such large and pure masses; some of these vases are valued at a hundred thousand rubles.

Some very splendid specimens of vases of this kind are also afforded by the imperial porcelain manufactory, which, however, vies less than any other with similar establishments in other countries. It is situated near Alexandrovsk, where there is also an iron-foundry. The latter is erected in a style of great elegance, but yields in the excellence of workmanship to an establishment of the same kind in St. Petersburg, belonging to an Englishman of the name of Bearth. Even the government finds it necessary to entrust any important commission, not to its own manufactory, but to Mr. Bearth's.

The vast and important establishments of this Englishman are behind the new Admiralty, where there are a sugar refinery, works for cutting timber, and the iron-foundry. For the transport of the raw material and the completed work, as well as for the ten steam-boats which Mr. Bearth owns, and which are employed as passage-boats between Cronstadt and St. Petersburg, he has constructed a harbour on his own account. Several steam-engines are employed in cutting the timber; and in order that planks may be furnished to meet the demand at all times of the year, the canal in which the beams float is heated in winter by steam-pipes, that the water may never freeze. The whole year through, the greedy saw is at work, demolishing what in the forests of Mordwina and Viatka was the production of centuries; and countless are the numbers of planks destined to spring beneath the feet of the dance-loving beauties of St. Petersburg, till the red light on the steeples of the city announces their end in one of the numerous conflagrations of the city.

The sugar refinery is not shown to any one, because the immense consumption of Mr. Bearth's sugar is the result of the employment of some substitute for bullocks'-blood in the purification of the sugar, and the nature of this substitute is a secret. The pious scruples of the Russians were carried to so extravagant a pitch, that they renounced the use of sugar during their fasts, on account of the small quantity of animal substance used in the refining. No sugar but that bearing the stamp of Bearth is ever seen on the table during the fasts, because none of the forbidden animal juice is employed in its fabrication. It is used, therefore,



through Russia, on the Steppes of the south, and in the sterile neighbourhood of the Obi and the Irtysh, where it fetches a most astonishing price.

The largest cotton-spinning establishment in the city was founded a few years ago by Baron Stieglitz. It is worked by an enormous English steam-engine of one hundred and ten horsepower, the largest of the kind in the east of Europe, and must be the people from east Europe and Asia who throng to St. Petersburg a marvellous idea of the inventive genius of the English, and of the boldness of the human spirit. Let any one think for a moment of one hundred and ten labouring horses, with their four hundred and forty weary legs, the smacking of whips, the clatter and jingle of the harness, and the waste of breath in bawling and cursing, and then come and admire the grand and simple motion of the steam-engine—the gentle, easy, noiseless movement of its oil-smeared giant arms. The machine stands in a great hall, with cast-iron balustrades and steps around, from which one can admire at leisure the superb play of the muscles of this mighty iron man.

The director is Mr. Greig, an Englishman, from whom we wished to obtain permission to inspect the manufactory. In vain we inquired for him; no one knew any such person. "Had we permission from Mr. Feodor Rovanovitch?" (Frederick Robert's son.) Luckily, Feodor Rovanovitch, who was no other than the elegantly-dressed Mr. Greig himself, and whose family name the Russian, as usual, knew nothing about, entered at that moment, and was kind enough to show us the place himself. The fresh and healthy exterior of the workmen, compared with the depraved, miserable, sickly appearance of the manufacturing population in France, Belgium, and Germany, was striking. The light-tempered Russian never remains so long in one kind of employment as to be injured by it. Neither is the tyranny of the master-manufacturers so systematic here as in other countries.

The most important manufactory on the Viborg side is conducted by a German, who related many interesting anecdotes of the various nations who had representatives among his one thousand workmen. He made use of the Finns wherever much patience and little movement was required, where knots and entanglement required a gentle finger; but the Russians, who are apt to untie knots after the fashion of Alexander the Great, were mostly employed where speed and activity were wanting. He further told us that nearly half of his workmen were employed in giving to cloths, Manchester cottons, &c. a brighter and more showy outside, without which the Russians and people of Asia do not value them. The finest goods are subjected to rough handling for this purpose, and literally go through fire and water, to the great injury, one would think, of their intrinsic worth.

Within the last ten years, establishments for making mathe-

matical instruments have been founded by German mechanics. I saw the workshop of one, where sixteen journeymen were employed; four were placed there as apprentices by the crowd. It is worthy of remark, that many parts of the instruments are worked in platina, which metal the Russians need not be sparing of, and which will one day obtain a decided preference for the instruments.

For the fashionable world, one of the grandest establishments to be seen anywhere is the so-called English magazine. It was begun many years ago by some English people, and hence its name, though neither the proprietors nor all the goods are any longer English. One department is devoted to jewellery of all kinds, and of a splendour and abundance rarely seen in a royal collection. Another contains every possible requisite of the toilet, for which an active correspondence is kept up with Paris, London, and Vienna, to obtain the newest and best from those centres of fashion. As it is decreed by the world of fashion that nothing is good or wearable but what is bought here, all sorts of things are sold, the rarest and the commonest; from diamonds of the first water down to shoe-blackening, which last article is so elegantly put up, that the wealthiest prince need not disdain to put it in his pocket.

A great part of these wares is now made in St. Petersburg. The proprietors keep a multitude of foreign artists and workmen in their pay, who work for them alone; and thus the credit of the magazine is maintained, and the things pass for foreign, though the public very well know that not half the things labelled as from Paris or London ever saw either Paris or London.

The prices of the goods sold in this shop are enormous, and would appear ridiculous in any other city. Here, where money is but little valued, many a one is glad enough to be rid of his useless bank notes in exchange for some pretty thing that pleases his fancy for a time at least; and when the shopkeeper assures his patrons that he has sold everything at the lowest possible price, and only so low because they are constant customers, they are good-natured enough to believe him. When we consider, however, that the people behind the counter are gentlemen who can answer in every language in Europe, that the magazine pays one thousand rubles rent for every window, and that every bronzo lamp that remains half a year unsold may be said to cost one hundred rubles merely for warehouse-room, the prices demanded will appear less extravagant.

The furniture magazine of Gamb, a very celebrated one of its kind, was founded by a simple Suabian carpenter of that name; but as, in Russia, every workshop easily becomes a manufactory, his three sons, who are only his successors, elegant young St. Petersburgers, carry on the business wholesale, and keep fifty or sixty cabinet-makers constantly employed, besides many sculptors, carvers in wood, painters, and designers. In their magazine

goods are displayed to the value of millions; some of the rooms, a thing particularly desirable in Russia, are filled with portable household furniture of every description for the use of travellers. Here are complete beds, bedsteads, and everything else, packed in chests four and a-half feet long, three-quarters of a foot wide, and four inches high; a tent with chairs, tables, and every accommodation, for sitting, lying, dining, or sleeping, all packed up in one chest. The proprietors have naturally become inventive in this branch; for the spoiled children of fortune are continually leaving luxurious St. Petersburg for the steppes of the Pontus, for the inhospitable Caucasus, or the Siberian deserts, and are glad to be able to take with them some of the accustomed conveniences of civilised life packed up among their luggage.

The only kind of *bergère* that the Messrs. Gamb have excluded from their magazine is that in which man enjoys the softest and most undisturbed of all slumbers—his coffin. Many other magazines furnish them in abundance. These melancholy commodities are piled up by hundreds for all religions, ranks, and ages; black with golden crosses for the Protestants; brown and light colour for the Russians of the Greek Church; small rose-coloured ones, with white lace, for young girls; azure blue for boys. As the dead are always laid out immediately in Russia, coffins must be kept ready-made, and in considerable numbers, to afford a choice.

There are about two hundred and fifty wine and beer cellars in St. Petersburg. Only those frequented by the lower classes have anything interesting or characteristic about them. Here are sold beer, mead, spirituous liquors, and bad wine, and here also people say what they think of themselves and of the pictures that adorn the walls. These pictures offer the stranger many facilities for studying the national character of the Russians. In the most glaring colours are represented the ideas of the lower classes on the most important subjects of human thought: the Deity, heaven, hell, the soul, and the creation of the world; without some reference to which, steeped as they are in fanaticism and ascetic practices, they would not venture even to swallow a mouthful of beer. This kind of tap-rooms are usually prepared with such pictures like a show-box. The study of them is the more interesting because they are in general very old, and with many of them not the slightest deviation from old-established types is ever permitted. They are generally the productions of the church painters of Moscow and Kiev; in which cities, under the shadow of the most ancient and most sacred temples of Russia, this kindred branch of industry is still in high preservation, and the fancy they display is exceedingly and orientally grotesque. You may see, for example, the day of creation depicted on an enormous scale. On the upper part chaos is represented by dark, vigorous strokes; morass, water, and unformed masses of rock in fearful confusion; over it lowers a thick dark cloud,

made palpable by a single stroke of the brush; in the midst hovers the Creator, under the physiognomy of a Russian priest, from whose mouth proceeds the creative "Be thou," scratched in the old Slavonian character; and beneath it the sun and the stars glide out of chaos, the sun closely resembling a Medusa's head, attended by the moon and the seven greater planets. On each side every star its name is written in the Slavonian character. The other stars are running after a solid blue beam, which represents the firmament. They revolve, sun and all, about the cart of which a portion, the Garden of Eden, is indicated on the lower part of the canvass, and on it smiles the sun, his rays indicated by a multitude of yellow stripes crossing one another. On either side, over Paradise, clouds are heaped; from one-half fall thick spots as black as ink, near which is written "rain," and out of the other an equally generous allowance of white dabs, with "snow" written in great letters on the other side; for a Russian can hardly picture to himself Paradise without snow. Round about Paradise runs a garland of mountains, some of whose summits reach the stars. The less a Russian knows of mountains the more liberally his fancy paints them. The edges of the mountains are abundantly sprinkled with flowers, of every colour of the rainbow, and almost as big as the mountains themselves. Between every two flowers stands regularly a tree; the tree sometimes overshadowing the flowers, and sometimes the flowers overshadowing the tree; and near them several times inscribed the words, "the blooming flowers, the blooming flowers." In the middle of the garden Adam and Eve are kneeling, a Russian and his wife; close to them a fountain, breathed on by two swollen-checked cherub-heads, signifying the air, and dancing over it, a gigantic Will-o'-the-wisp, indicating fire. All around, in the tumultuous excitement of creation's dawn, all the creatures of nature and fancy seem to be bellowing; all the birds, real and unreal, the elephant, the lion, the unicorn, the seducing serpent, the leviathan, the hare, the carp, the fish of Jonas, the four beasts of the Apocalypse, rats and mice. The whole picture is in a frame of arabesques of wreaths and heads of saints and angels.

In this style all the pictures are done. Mount Athos, so renowned in the Russian-Greek Church, is never represented with less than a hundred and fifty churches and convents on it; and every church has at least a dozen cupolas. When Mount Sinai is represented, it is like Pelion on Ossa, and Ossa on Olympus; a column of mountains with an exceedingly pointed summit reaching to Sirius, with Moses on the top.

Among the many things to interest strangers in St. Petersburg, the booksellers' shops are not the most unimportant. The firm of Brieff and Gräfe is the oldest of the German houses, by whom the greater part of the German and French books that have appeared in Russia have been published. The first Russian book-

seller is decidedly Smirdin. One cannot but be astonished at the rich assortment which Russian literature has already enabled him to offer, and at the elegant style in which they are got up. Perhaps at no time was such miserable paper, such detestable type, and such a measureless want of taste and accuracy in printing, to be met with in Russia as we formerly saw, and do yet occasionally see in Germany. Since the commencement of this century, however, Russia has made such rapid advances that the modern productions may stand a comparison with those of any nation. Russian books are generally printed on a very fine paper in a very large type; but there are some 12mos and 16mos which leave nothing to be desired in point of neatness and elegance. Books from Smirdin's press may now venture to show their faces boldly in the boudoirs of the most fastidious ladies, by the side of the choicest productions of London and Paris; and the time is long gone by when a Russian nobleman could only allow a Russian book to stand here and there in the dust of the lowest shelves, in his almost exclusively French library. It is not only by the extent, however, of the booksellers' stocks in St. Petersburg and Moscow, where there are shops containing upwards of one hundred thousand volumes, that we may estimate the extraordinary advance of Russian literature: the prices given to favourite authors afford also a good criterion. There are Russian authors who have realised estates of many square miles out of their inkstands; some have received five thousand or six thousand rubles, merely to lend their names to a journal; and there are periodicals that count not less than twenty thousand subscribers. The greatest new work in hand is the National Encyclopædia, which pays as much as one hundred and two hundred rubles a sheet to its contributors, and must reckon, therefore, on a tolerably large circulation. Russian literature is now strong enough in pinion to soar on a level with that of France, if not to take a flight above it, in the estimation of the best native circles.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TABLE AND KITCHEN.

It is a certain fact that the people of Crete to this day roast their goats'-flesh exactly as that was roasted which cheered the fainting soul of the much-enduring Ulysses, after his storm-tossed passage thither. The pillaw, the well-known tower of rice and mutton, the centre dish even now of the oriental table, smoked on the boards of the Persian and Parthian, in the times of the Greeks and the Romans; and there can be no doubt that many a Babylonian stone and marble tower will yet rise and fall in those countries before the towers of rice will be overthrown. There are certainly many animals and vegetables, and, consequently, many dishes, which have been introduced into lands where they

were before unknown, and have thus revolutionized their kitchens. Coffee, potatoes, and maize, in Europe, and the spread of our horned cattle in America, are the most striking examples of this. Among beverages, tea, wine, and spirituous distillations, have also their claims to historical consideration. Nevertheless, on the whole, all nations cling with extraordinary tenacity and constancy to their old customs and their old culinary faith, and their traditions, and myths, and old nurses' stories; nay, as examples already referred to prove, the system of cookery often survives systems of religion, and political constitutions fall, while the institutions of the kitchen maintain their ground.

There is a town in Germany, in which, on high festival-days, a certain cake is prepared, called a krull-cake. These cakes are mentioned in the oldest chronicles of the city, in narrating the choice of a *Bürgermeister*, or some such occurrence. It is recorded in "Platt Deutsch," that they held a council and ate krull-cakes. The city was then Catholic. Three hundred years ago it became Protestant, but to the old faith in krull-cakes it has adhered. The inhabitants dressed formerly in the old Spanish costume; that gradually gave way to the French; but the krull-cakes held their ground, and the Gallic-clad senators munched as the Spanish had done. At a later period the city lost all its old constitution, as part of the Germanic body, and was incorporated with France; and thus the men became outwardly and inwardly another people, spoke another language, wore other clothing, and thought other thoughts. But to this day they bake and eat krull-cakes, as their blessed forefathers did before them, though perhaps they do not resemble them in any other particular. These are things that seem to have escaped the observation and research of philosophers more than any other kind of phenomenon.

To make krull-cakes, fine sifted wheat or flour is taken, skimmed-milk, so many eggs, and certain spices; the dough is put into an iron mould, and toasted at a gentle fire. In this recipe so much seems arbitrary that one would expect continual change. On the contrary, the fashion of the cake has survived the storms of centuries, and seems to possess a constant power of self-reproduction, like plants and minerals.

The preparation of many kinds of food is maintained in certain forms by religious and political laws, as the unleavened bread of the Jews, which is in form, taste, and essence, the same as it was in the time of Moses. That is intelligible; but how is the fashion of cookery maintained without any such aid? Strabo mentions certain flat-pressed sausages of pigs'-meat, that were favourite articles of food with the people of Byzantium. Byzantium has since been Roman, Greek, Latin, Turkish, and is about to become Russian; and those flat sausages exist yet in Constantinople, and are carried thence into the neighbouring provinces. So it was in Strabo's time the custom, in certain provinces by the Black Sea, to cut beef into long strips and dry it in the air to preserve it.

These customs did not certainly arise from any natural necessity, for there are many countries quite as dry, and where there is a still greater want of fuel, where the custom never prevailed, but on the Black Sea it prevails to this day.

The character of many a nation depends certainly, in no small degree, on the food which the country yields; and, on the other hand, the character of the nation as certainly operates on the choice and preparation of its food. Certain inclinations to certain kinds of food may also be traced among different nations. Swine's flesh was at all times an abomination to the Arabians, and the aversion of the Jew to pork would alone suffice to show him of Arabian origin. The Germanic nations have always held beef in favour, and they alone know how to prepare it so as to make it savoury and nutritive. In Germany as in England, in Sweden as in Norway and Denmark, the German blood announces itself by this unfailing test. The Roman nations, the French, the Spaniards, and the Italians, have all something in common in their kitchen, as in their language and history.

The chief national dish of the Russians is their "shtshee," which, as far as the Russian name extends, neither moral nor political revolution has ever driven from their table or their hearts. It is seen on the board of the serf, and is constantly to be found at the tables of the rich, where it maintains its place amid the ragouts and pasties of France. One can hardly believe, when the Russian, in a foreign land, is heard to lament, in a strain of pathetic eloquence, the loss of his "shtshee," or when one hears in Riga that the three mightiest gods of the Russian nation are Tshin, Tshai, and Shtshee (rank, tea, and cabbage soup)—one can scarcely believe, I say, that the beloved shtshee is simply cabbage soup, and neither more nor less—but so it is; shtshee and shtshee again is the staff of life with all the people living between Kamtschatka and the Prussian frontier; indeed, the bones, nerves, muscles, and flesh of the great majority of the Russians may be looked upon in some sort as the solid essence of shtshee. Forty millions of human beings put up their daily prayer for their daily shtshee. It is the main subsistence of the mighty Russian army, consisting of a million of fighting men. Wherever the Russian comes as a settler or as a conqueror—in the Baltic provinces, in Finland, in the lands of Tartary, at the foot of the Caucasian or the Altai Mountains—be assured he will not fail to lay out a mighty cabbage-garden, wherewith to gladden his stomach with the much-beloved shtshee.

The mode of preparing this remarkable dish varies greatly, and there are almost as many kinds of shtshee as of cabbages. Six or seven heads of cabbage chopped up, half a pound of barley-meal, a quarter of a pound of butter, a handful of salt, and two pounds of mutton cut into small pieces, with a can or two of "quass," make an excellent shtshee. With the very poor, the butter and the meat are of course left out, which reduces the

composition to the cabbage and the quass. In the houses of the wealthy, on the contrary, many ingredients are added, and rules laid down to be closely observed: "bouillon" is used instead of quass: the meat is salted and pressed for six-and-thirty hours, and is put raw to the already boiling cabbage; thick cream is added, and the whole mixture, when complete, is pronounced unsurpassably excellent.

The second dish in importance is the "posdnoi shtshee" or "fasting shtshee," in which fish is used instead of meat, oil instead of butter, &c. The lower classes eat it usually with a kind of fish not larger than a sprat, skin and all boiled to a pap, and to give it additional flavour a portion of thick oil is added.

"Botvinya" is another right Russian dish, and nearly akin to shtshee. The latter is the staple of the Russian table the whole year through; but "botvinya" is only eaten in the summer. The ingredients, which are warm in the shtshee, are put cold into the botvinya: cold quass, raw herbs, red berries, chopped cucumbers, and lastly salmon or some other fish, cut into square lumps. At the better tables, slices of lemon are sometimes added, toasted black bread, cut small, and, to make it yet cooler, small lumps of ice. This is the famous "botvinya;" and if any one be at a loss to imagine how these can all agree with the "quass" (thin beer) in which they swim about, let him by all means come to Russia, and eat of the dish for a few years, when, no doubt, he will find the ingredients all equally good and harmonious.

Perhaps the climate of Russia, where the summer is always excessively hot, as the winter is always excessively cold, is the cause of the decided and strictly maintained distinctions between the summer and the winter *cuisine*. Every season has its own soup, its own poultry, its own pastry. To many, a positive date for their enjoyment may be given. Fruit comes in on the 8th of August, ice on Easter Sunday. Religion, which has much to do with the Russian table, prohibits the eating of certain articles of food before a certain day. Saturday's dishes differ throughout the whole country from Sunday's: Friday and Wednesday, as fast-days, have other food prescribed than Monday and Thursday. It is all one in Germany what food is set before the guests at a funeral: in Russia, it must be a kind of rice-soup, with plums and raisins. The cake broken over the head of the newly-born child is of a particular kind. Weddings, betrothments, &c. have all their appointed dishes; and it must not be forgotten that these household regulations hold good for not less than three hundred thousand German square miles, and forty millions of people.

Meat is almost always eaten by the Russians (we speak of the great bulk of the people), either boiled, pickled, or salted; they seldom smoke meat, not even their hams and bacon; roasting is almost unknown to them. It is incredible how bad the bread is, considering the goodness of the corn; it is all more or less sour, and why this is so, it is not easy to discover. Another fault is, that



it is never sufficiently baked, but that is characteristic of a people who choose to eat more unripe than ripe fruit. It were easy to leave their fruit a little longer on the tree, their bread a little longer in the oven, but that is never done. Pasties of all kinds (pirogas) are in great favour with the Russians: things so little known in German that we have not even a word for them. The Russians pack everything that can be chopped up into pies: vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, flesh, and fish: the paste is generally detestable.

It must be very gratifying to the author of a Russian cookery-book to think that his sphere of influence is so extensive. For example, if he speak of "blinni," and say it is a kind of pancake eaten with caviare and port wine, in the "butter-week," as it is called, before the great fast, he is unquestionably rewarded for his trouble by the reflection that the whole empire is suffering from indigestion at the same time. So great a uniformity in eating must partly cause, and partly presuppose, a great uniformity of moral and physical constitution.

If the inward character and the mysterious nature of the veiled Psyche of a nation speak not less intelligibly in the productions of its kitchen than in the productions of any other art, it may not be superfluous to mention the great preference the Russians show for all kinds of food that can be grated and mashed up. It is as if food in a solid form were unbearable to the Russian, or he too lazy to chew! Everything must melt in his mouth, and find its way to the maze within him, without any trouble on his part. An energetic, active people like to crunch and bite! What were their teeth for else? The Russians may indeed quote the gods of Greece as their patterns, for doubtless the ambrosia of Olympus must have been something of the consistence of their much-loved "kissels" and "pastelas;" for if, on the one hand, we cannot suppose ambrosia to have been a liquid soup, to be conveyed with spoons to the expectant mouths of the immortals, on the other hand it cannot have been a hard, tooth-exercising substance, for mastication is something exceedingly un-ideal and inconsistent with godlike attributes.

The quantity of sweetmeats, wet and dry, consumed at a Russian festival is perfectly astonishing; for balls they are bought by the pood (thirty-six pounds English); and many a merchant's wife, if she be rich enough, consumes half her life in eating sugar, which, in one kind of preparation or another, is crunched, sucked, and swallowed all day long.

Of liquids, the most national and most general is quass, which occupies the same place as a beverage that shtshee does as a dish. The Russian of the lower class can no more live without quass than a fish without water. It is not only his constant drink, but the foundation of all his soups and sauces, which are rarely made with simple water, but almost always with quass. Quass is the basis of all his food, solid and liquid; in quass all things dis-

solve and swim; even on the tables of the wealthiest, among the wines and liqueurs, instead of decanters of water appear decanters of quass. Fortunately it is a light and wholesome beverage. It is prepared in the following manner: a pailful of water is put into an earthen vessel, into which are shaken two pounds of barley-meal, half-a-pound of salt, and a pound and a-half of honey. This mixture is put in the evening into a kind of oven, with a moderate fire, and constantly stirred. In the morning it is left for a time to settle, and then the clear liquid is poured off. The quass is then ready, and may be drunk in a few days: in a week it is at its highest perfection. As quass is thought good only when prepared in small quantities and in small vessels, every household brews for itself. In great houses a servant is kept for this purpose, who finds in it wherewithal to occupy him the whole day, and has as many mysterious observances in the preparation as if it were a spell, or as if there were as much significance in his labours as in those of Schiller's bell-founder.

Mead is another national and very ancient Slavonian beverage. In former times it was the only spirituous liquor of the Russians; but wine with the higher, and brandy with the lower classes, have superseded it in a great measure. Of late, however, it seems to be recovering some degree of favour. Perhaps the active research into the annals of Russia, and the reviving spirit of nationality, may be among the causes.

Brandy is now with all the Slavonian nations so powerful a deity, that in the sense in which it is said "gold rules the world," it may be added, "and brandy rules the Russians." The usual reward, the usual bribe, for the ordinary Russian, is not money, but brandy. The common people do not care half so much for money: no festival, no Easter, no Christmas, without brandy; brandy must urge the labourer to work and the warrior to battle. It is amazing how greedy they are for this fiery poison. Brandy is with the Russians a foreign innovation; but they have found a national name for it, and call it "Vodka," the little water. There is a fine poetical play of fancy implied in this loving diminutive. Thousands, through its consumption, are daily rendered rich, and thousands poor. A paper, which should give the true statistics and history of its consumption, would not be the least remarkable page in the history of the world.

The number of acid drinks in use in Russia is very great. It is remarkable that, much as the Russians love sweets, no kitchen deals so largely in acids as theirs. Perhaps their constitutions require those violent contrasts; perhaps, as extremes meet, the quantity of oil and thick fat substances they eat awaken the appetite for both the sweet and the sour.

Of all fruits, the produce of the highest north, the "mamurami" affords the pleasantest beverage. It is of the size and form of a mulberry, with the flavour of a pine-apple. Mixed with

champagne and wine it makes the finest punch in the world: a drink worthy of a poet's song.

Unfavourable as the climate of Russia seems to be to such enjoyments, there is no country where dining in the open air is so customary. A large quantity of food is constantly carried about the streets of the cities by peripatetic restaurateurs: in winter, hot tea and soups, potatoes, and hot cakes; in summer, ices, cool sherbets, quass, &c. &c. The number of places for the sale of ready-dressed food in Russian towns is immense; often a large hall or open booth, or some other spacious locality, is prepared as a dining-place for the lower classes, where the artist and the observer may find as rich a harvest for the pencil and the pen as the workman may of pirogas, quass, and shtshec. The great number of unmarried persons who live at St. Petersburg and other cities, without being *at home* there, render such establishments necessary.

In the consumption of meat, St. Petersburg surpasses any other city in Europe; and, if we exclude the badly-fed army of sixty thousand men from our reckoning, may perhaps be esteemed the best-fed city in the world. It consumes nearly four millions poods of corn yearly: that is, children, old people, and sick included, two hundred pounds a-head; one hundred thousand oxen; viz., a whole ox to every four and a-half men, without reckoning cows and calves. Of swine and sheep rather less are consumed than in Paris; but the destruction of fish is enormous. Of herrings, for example, in 1832, fifty-three thousand tons were brought to St. Petersburg: that is, one ton to every eight persons. According to the statement of the Minister of the Interior, in the same year, five hundred thousand poods of salt, or thirty-six pounds a-head (about one and a-half ounces a-day), was the consumption of St. Petersburg. It would be interesting to compare this statement with similar ones relative to London, Paris, and Vienna. Data enough are given in the journals of Russia, though it must be confessed that such grossly absurd contradictions appear in the statements, on the most superficial examination, that no one can attempt to reconcile the inconsistencies, or to calculate an average.

The environs of St. Petersburg are more sterile and unproductive than those of any capital in Europe, Madrid excepted; on which account it has been aptly enough called the New Palmyra: a magnificent and luxurious city in the midst of a desert. The merest trifles only are supplied by the neighbourhood. The daily bread ripens on the shores of the Volga, and has many a river and canal to pass before it reaches the ovens of St. Petersburg. Even the hay is brought from a great distance. Eggs, and such like articles of immediate consumption, come from the thickly-peopled environs of Moscow; hence trade in such articles is conducted on a much larger scale than elsewhere. Baskets full of

eggs are brought into our towns, but whole caravans of them are brought to St. Petersburg.

The fruit-gardens of St. Petersburg are in Stettin or the Crimea; their apples come from a distance of two hundred miles over a stormy sea, or of three hundred over the icy steppes. Their meat is fattened on the shores of the Black Sea; for only a tenth part of the consumption stated above is supplied from any other district. The salt is partly Calmuck, partly Swedish and Norwegian. The butter comes from Esthonia and Finland, and so on with the most ordinary articles. Those of luxury here, as everywhere else, are, of course, the product of foreign lands.

A St. Petersburg meal is served on so large a scale, that a native of that city must think himself in a land of famine in Hainburg, Vienna, or on the much-praised Rhine. The prologue to a dinner consists of so many appetizing dainties, that one may easily mistake it for the dinner itself; as an innocent peasant might mistake the richly-decorated drop-scene for the play. A Russian grand dinner is like a piece of music, of which, long after the chords have announced the approaching end, a multitude of thrills and cadences flourish as it were into a new part, till at last it comes to a close in a profusion of fruits and sweetmeats, and the performers separate. At a real Russian banquet the dessert is as distinct from the dinner as the preliminary whet, and is taken in another room. Liqueurs are taken before dinner to excite the appetite, and after dinner to assist digestion.

For the rest, it is with the St. Petersburg diners as with many other things in St. Petersburg: little real enjoyment, with a profusion of the means of enjoyment. The whole affair is carried on much too quickly. The dishes, which are cut up at the sideboard by the carver, and carried round, succeed each other with great rapidity. With every dish the suitable wine is offered by the servants in ready-filled glasses, till a perfect forest of them is gathered round each plate; but the epicure in wines misses the bottle from which he might help himself at pleasure to what he liked best. All these customs are *quant*, still more so that which fetters the guest to his place during the whole banquet. It is considered an unheard-of violation of propriety to rise from one's seat, even in the smallest family circle. The guests sit down *in pleno* at a sign from the host, and rise after the last dish, also *in pleno*; and no one may venture, as in England, to linger in jest or conversation over the bottle. When a toast is given, at which no speech or even sportive remark is ever made, every one rises silently, bows, touches his neighbour's glass with his own, and quickly reseats himself. To go up to any one in particular, to touch glasses, would be deemed the silliest proceeding in the world. A man eats at a Russian dinner as if he were tethered to a manger.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## FOREIGN TEACHERS.

EVERY spring, when the ice melts in the Gulf of Cronstadt, and the market behind the Exchange is opened with its gaily-covered wares of macaws and parroquets, and its abundance of rarities and delicacies, alive and dead, from the same ships that have brought out the new fashions and new books from London, Paris, and Lubeck, many young ladies may be seen landing with torn veils and ruffled head-gear. These are the lovely and unlovely Swiss, German, French, and English women destined to officiate in Russia as priestesses of Minerva, in fanning the flame of mental cultivation. Exhausted by sea-sickness, saddened by homesickness, frightened by the bearded Russians who greet their eyes in Cronstadt, and pierced through and through by the chill breath of a St. Petersburg May, they issue from their cabins, pale, timid, and slow, anxiety and white fear upon their lips, and despair in their eyes.

The manner in which Russia greets her newly-arrived guests is not the most friendly; and if it be true that a first impression of men or of countries is the most decisive and important, merciful heaven! what evil prognostics must not this reception call forth? No stranger ever landed in Russia whose first thought as he disembarked was not of his return. Not a guest would the country retain, it is my opinion, if, as soon as he stepped on shore, he could find an opportunity to go back again.

Unwillingly the fair strangers leave the ship, the last piece of their native land that has followed them to this strange region, and hurry to hide themselves and their sorrows in the first hotel on Vassili Ostrof, till their friends, or the family to which they are recommended, come to seek and bring them forth to the light of day.

Their entrance into a rich and distinguished house is a new stage of suffering; and if the rude voices, long beards, and filthy clothing of the barbarous population of the harbour terrified them, here the glitter of unwonted luxury alarms their bashfulness. The loud, tumultuous life of a great house in Russia, where no one comprehends their feelings in the slightest degree, is enough to overwhelm them; and, quartered in an apartment with the tribe of children entrusted to their care, they have scarcely a corner to themselves where they can weep out their grief. Once caught in the whirlpool of St. Petersburg society, they feel themselves at every turn wounded and repelled, and they feel that they in their turn repel and offend. However

their mothers and sisters may have exerted themselves to arrange their wardrobe, they quickly find it unsuited to the northern capital. They must learn to "sing another tune." Even Parisian manners will not do in St. Petersburg: their French pronunciation is criticised and found fault with, for the St. Petersburgers speak their own French, and modify the French manners after their own fashion. Even a French courtier would be found wanting here a hundred times, with his freedom of demeanour and easy habits: much more so a quiet Swiss governess just descended from her mountains, or a German tutor who has made a pilgrimage hither from some unknown nook of his fatherland, to aid some Russian statesman or court lady in the education of a family of children.

However, with time comes experience. The modest finery of the distant home is laid aside as a keepsake; the quickly-filled purse is resorted to; the outward form is modified after the fashions of St. Petersburg; the sentimentality of Western Europe is laid aside (for, compared to the Russians, not only the Germans, but even the French and English, are sentimental); and the strangers learn to assume, by day at least, a decorous mask of cheerfulness, and thus contrive in the end to put a good face on the matter, even should the pillow be tear-moistened at night.

The position of domestic tutors and governesses in Russia is peculiar, and much more important than with us. We have many, it is true, of both in Germany, France, and England, but it cannot be said they are greatly considered; they are moderately paid, and remain generally within certain limits, or find refuge in the holy state of matrimony or the church.

In Russia it is quite different: private teaching is there a profitable employment, and as such an object of all kinds of speculation; for the condition of private tutor is not only a very good stepping-stool to all sorts of honourable posts, but a solid employment for life, furnishing not only an abundant maintenance for the present, but offering the prospect of a future free from care. It is, indeed, a game of chance, like everything else in Russia; but one in which, with many blanks, there are an extraordinary number of prizes. "Consider now, my dear boy, what you would like to be," said a father in St. Petersburg to his son, whom he had sent for from Germany, where he had finished his studies; "whether you feel most inclination for the Finance or the Department of the Interior, whether you would like to be Director of the Post or of the Bank, or whether you would prefer the Mastership of the Woods and Forests or of the Mines, or whether you would like to enter the military service." To a tutor in a Russian nobleman's family all these careers are open; you have only to find the right entrance.

A young man who is tolerably pleasing in manner and appearance, or at all *comme il faut*, as it is called, with his solid German

acquirements, is tolerably certain to find this entrance; that is, if he can stand the fiery ordeal to which his position as domestic tutor subjects him. There are many young men who from tutors have become state and privy councillors; many also who, from mere sorrow and hunger (of the mind), have lost not only all joy in life, but sometimes life itself.

It is much the same with the governess. If she be tolerably pretty and agreeable, and possess some of those *talents de société* which the Russians value so highly, she can scarcely fail to entangle the heart of some young adjutant or colonel, as whose lady she will give soirées and balls in her turn; but a cherished wife, a loving mother to loving children——?

And even if such should not be her lot, if she can accommodate herself to the humour of her patroness, she may lead a very supportable, brilliant life. She will find opportunities of making her light shine before men, and of gratifying her vanity; and, what is more, she may look with tolerable certainty to an ultimate retreat to her native land, with a little fortune to solace the evening of her days. The cities of Montbeliard, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, and some others, the nurseries for governesses for all Europe, are full of small capitalists of both sexes, who have accumulated their little fortunes in Russia. To maintain themselves successfully in such a position, however, they require a total want of susceptibility, whether false or real, for the Russians are pitiless towards such feelings. In their stead let there be a certain coldness and strength of character, and a resolute and watchful defence; for the Russian always strikes his flag to perseverance and firmness.

Some contrive to accommodate themselves so thoroughly to the Russian element as to exchange their own natural peculiarities for those of Russia, and prefer remaining for life where they have spent the better part of it. In many Russian families are to be found such after-growths of superannuated English nurses, Frenchwomen, and Germans, who have adhered to the family till they are considered regular parts of it, and enjoy all the privileges of adoption accordingly.

In St. Petersburg, which keeps all articles of the first quality for itself, and dispatches the inferior ones into the provinces, much is of course required, and the capabilities of the tutors and tutoresses employed there must be much on a par with other capitals; but in the provinces it is wonderful what a cry of astonishment is often raised at very moderate endowments.

"He is a miracle of a Nyemetz (German) that I have got for my children," assured me once a thorough Russian gentleman in one of the provinces: "he speaks German, English, French, Greek, Latin, and knows all sorts of sciences that ever were. It is wonderful to hear how he plays on the piano-forte and sings. Ah, heaven! I am perfectly amazed at the man!" On a nearer acquaintance, I found this "wonder" a very ordinary person

indeed, who had certainly a smattering of many things, but seemed to me hardly *master* of his native language.

The tutor in a Russian provincial house is always an oracle, and the governess a prophetess. If, at table or elsewhere, anything occur relative to any science whatever, all eyes turn to the oracle, before whose omniscience all are dumb. To doubt him would compromise the doubter: all listen attentively. "Ah! you must know! That is all in your way." How often an honest German is almost compelled to make a solemn face, and play the part of conjurer thus forced on him against his will! "I do not know;" "That is not in my way;" "I imagine so and so." Such a way of speaking would ruin a man's credit for ever in the interior of Russia. "What does he say?" "He don't know!" "Why does he not know? We do not know either. Then he knows no more than we do! God knows what he does know! He is one of those learned quacks who are so plentiful with us." "You must know, sir; you must be sure; say yes or no. What lies between yes and no? Uncertainty, ignorance. If you don't know, sir, why do you call yourself a learned man? Solomon says, that all knowledge is vanity, but two thousand years have passed away since then. Almost everything is known now, and you, as a German and an examined teacher, ought to know everything. The devil! else why do we pay the Syemtzi so much money?"

Learning and science help the teacher but little in Russia, if they are not sometimes positively injurious to him in his social relations; the appearance of them is the one thing needful. Musical talent, piano-forte playing, and singing, are of great value, and will win him many a heart; but the most valuable qualifications are elegant dancing and address at cards. He who dances well and plays well at cards is the true man, "*comme il faut*," and he who is *comme il faut* is the man of all others for the Russians. He who can win five hundred rubles at whist in an evening, sing German songs well, and display a graceful new step in the dance, he is their most intimate friend: he is more; he is their lord and master, and may rule their hearts at will. There are a multitude of foreigners in Russia, who, by the exercise of accomplishments like these, have obtained the highest influence in families, which they guide as the Jesuits are said to have done formerly.

This is the easier for them, because the Russians have, in serious business, more confidence in foreigners than in their own countrymen, and trust the former willingly with their secrets. To this it may be added, that in all Russian houses many patriarchal customs prevail; all members of the household come to be looked upon as integral parts of it, and, with the little fastidiousness of the Russian in reference to difference of birth, speedily amalgamate with the family. Whoever shows a cheerful countenance, takes all things as he finds them, is willing to



renounce his individuality, and to make a part of the social dough into which he is baked like a plum into a cake, may reckon upon an existence outwardly comfortable enough, and his vanity will often enough be agreeably tickled; but he must not take too rigidly into the account how often his self-love and sense of honour suffer in the process.

It is well known that the Russians pay their teachers highly: three to four thousand rubles yearly is a usual salary; but sometimes as much as six, or even ten thousand, when they wish to allure an instructor to Siberia, or to any of the more distant provinces. A pension is generally secured at the end of the engagement; or, as the fashion now begins to prevail, a round sum of thirty or forty thousand rubles when the education is completed. The salaries have of late rather increased than diminished, on account of the sparing manner in which passports have been granted for Russia.

The majority of the tutors are obtained, or "written for," as the phrase runs, from Germany and France; the governesses mostly from French Switzerland. Many come from the Baltic provinces, Germanised Esthonians and Livonians of the lower ranks, who turn the German and French they have picked up to good account in the interior of Russia.

In Dorpat I once met a Russian nobleman who had engaged seven governesses for himself and his friends, and was setting off with them for the interior, packed in three caleches.

The *bonnes*, or nursery maids for the younger children in St. Petersburg, must be English, who, by general consent, are pronounced better suited for the office than those of any other nation.

The great educational institutions in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other places, and the Foundling Hospital, furnish yearly from eight hundred to a thousand young women for the offices of instruction: they are scattered throughout the empire, where, in too many places, their previously over-delicate education renders them very unhappy.

Governesses are to be met with in all societies in St. Petersburg, of which they are often the best leaven. Tutors are seen in every corner with their pupils, and form a considerable element of the population of the city.

The government busies itself so constantly with the matter of private education, that there are already a multitude of laws and regulations concerning "instituteurs, institutrices, and precepteurs." The latest and most remarkable is that of 1834, in which all the privileges of the examined private tutors are detailed. According to this ukase, they are reckoned in the service of the state, and consequently entitled to wear the "lesser uniform" of the Ministry of Public Instruction. Private tutors in the old noble families are advanced after two years' service into the fourteenth rank; those in merchants' families of the first guild,

of preachers, priests, and the lower class of nobility, have the same rank after three years' service; in those of persons of no positive rank, after five years'; and in those classes not entitled to enter the service of the state, the tutors are not entitled to this fourteenth grade till after eight years' service. They may then, like all other officials, expect in process of time to become titular councillors, court councillors, &c. &c. There are already councillors of state in Russia who have never been anything else but private teachers. "Instituteurs" are the *educators*, properly speaking, and take precedence of "precepteurs," who merely give lessons. After fifteen years' irreproachable service, the instituteurs in noble families receive the cross of the order of St. Anne of the third class; the precepteurs, the cross of the order of St. Stanislaus of the fourth class; the tutors in non-noble houses can only obtain the St. Vladimir's cross of the fourth class after twenty to five-and-twenty or thirty years' service. Whoever in five-and-twenty years has prepared three pupils for the university receives the title of *Instituteur Emérite*. On the receipt of each of these signs of honour, they must pay one hundred rubles to the fund for the maintenance of impoverished and sick private tutors.

Those regulations are selected from the above-named ukase as interesting and characteristic. There are similar laws for actors, fencing-masters, drawing-masters, teachers of music, &c. &c. For all these persons cuttings and snippings have been saved from the decorations and ribbons of generals and marshals, and thereby have little miniature marks of honour been manufactured, the value of which it requires a moral microscope to discover. Is not this rather to throw ridicule than to confer distinction on a class of persons whose business is so highly important in itself?

In the public schools there is a fixed uniform for all the masters and pupils, one for week days and another for Sundays, and a state uniform for high festivals. No lesson is allowed to be given except in uniform; and the continual reproofs and chastisements on account of those uniforms take up much more time than the correction of real faults. Those very paltry matters not only waste the time, but exhaust the powers of the teacher for more essential objects. The same spirit reigns in the private as in the public schools. There is a constant anxiety about outward appearance; an incessant criticising and reproving for trifling faults of dress, walk, speech, demeanour, &c.

This glaring contrast between the splendour of the apparatus and the poverty of the result has naturally excited a feeling of contempt among thinking persons, who, however, as before observed, would do better to examine carefully what has been done by the thousands of Russian schools, and not to be too severe on what those schools have omitted to do.

Mathematics form a main object of instruction in all Russian schools, and are pursued with some success; geography, also,

particularly that of their own giant land, is cultivated with extraordinary and praiseworthy diligence. The history of Russia is carefully taught in detail; and there is no doubt that the pupils in a Russian school, taken on the whole, could give a better account of Russia, both historically and geographically, than the pupils of a German school could of their much-divided country. The weakest points are natural philosophy and classical literature. The neglect of the latter may be pardonable enough; but in a country whose natural productions are yet so little inquired into, and which offers such abundant materials for increasing the resources of the state, it is quite inconceivable why more attention is not paid to the hidden powers of Nature. The state of medical science may be considered as forming some exception to so general a censure.

The University of St. Petersburg is too much like our own in its principal features, and yields too little fruit, to deserve particular mention. One of the most important and most peculiar institutions is the so-called "Pedagogical Institute," the object of which is to form teachers of all kinds, teachers for the national schools, for the gymnasia, and even professors for the universities. It was established in 1832, after the Polish revolution. The reformation or abolition of the Polish schools, the object of which was to deprive the Catholic clergy and monks of the education of youth, caused a great want of Russian teachers to be felt. To supply this want the institution was founded, and endowed with nearly all the privileges of a university. It is under the direction of a learned German, who, with the assistance of his many able coadjutors, will doubtless accomplish as much as can be done by the means at his control. The Pedagogical Institution is maintained by the crown at an expense of not less than two hundred and fifty thousand rubles yearly.

The most distinguished pupils, who are intended for professors, are dismissed with the name and rank of titular councillor, books to the amount of four hundred rubles, a complete wardrobe, the third part of their future salary as a present from the institution, and a considerable present for travelling expenses from the emperor. There are about one hundred and sixty young men there at present; about as many have been already sent out, the greater part to Poland.

They have all sorts of inventions for facilitating the acquirement of languages, historical dates, names, &c.: among others, one was handed to us, as quite miraculous in its operation, when we visited the institution. It is the invention of a Russian, to impress his historical numbers more firmly on the memory. The great school-board, and the smaller ones of the pupils, were covered with a chronological net, arranged for the two thousand years after the birth of Christ. This net-work of lines, crossing each other at right angles, had twenty great divisions, each of which was destined for a century, and one hundred smaller sub-

divisions or net stitches, ten of a row, and ten under them. Each of these interstices signified a year of the century. The teacher made in different interstices a cross, and then caused the pupil to repeat the event of the indicated year, or he related the historical occurrence, and the pupil made the corresponding cross. It was affirmed that the use of this net and the practice connected with it enabled the pupil "*de s'orienter*" more quickly in the various regions of universal history than the ordinary chronological tables. There was a particular net for Russian history, and the pupils showed, in our presence, that they had all the celebrated names at their fingers' ends.

Languages are taught in a very practical manner, four or five at a time, and for the most part without a grammar. For this purpose they have caused polyglot editions of many classical authors to be prepared; and the pupils were required, in our presence, to translate out of Greek into Latin, out of Latin into German, French, or Russian, which they did very readily. All the instruction is given through the medium of foreign languages; in one lesson the questions are put in Latin, in another in German, and so on, and answered in the same tongue.

Geography is taught with the chalk or pencil in the hand. The pupils must directly make an outline of the map on the school board and their own slates. One is desired to give the coast of Europe from the thirtieth to the fortieth degree of latitude, another from the fortieth to the fiftieth, and so on. The rivers and mountains, in the same way, are not only to be named, but drawn. The outlines thus given were wonderfully exact. They also named the latitudes and longitudes of the chief cities of Europe; which, *notu bene*, we, the German examiners, as we gave the names at random, could not always do. Our geographical teachers might with advantage adopt some of the Russian methods.

To exercise the pupils in the art of teaching, a system of mutual instruction is practised, as in the Lancasterian schools, but of course under the direction of the masters. The ablest in each class are made to act both as teachers and monitors. It is strange that this method is not more in use in German schools, and that the old proverb, "*Docendo, discimus*," has been so long a dead-letter with us.

The method of teaching drawing in this institution pleased us extremely. The pupil is not merely exercised in a slavish imitation of the copy laid before him, but in designing, and in the execution of given subjects. One of the pupils drew on his board for us a very pretty sketch of a Cossack shooting down a Turk: a subject which seems in a very lively manner to interest the fancy of the Russian child, as well as that of the Russian diplomatist.

Another school peculiar to St. Petersburg is the "Technical School," founded about seven years ago by the Finance Minister

Count Kankrin. Its object is to furnish teachers of the mechanical trades to Russia. Two hundred and forty pupils are taken, who receive the necessary mathematical and other instruction, and are at the same time exercised in the construction of machines and in other departments of mechanics. The buildings are very extensive, and every art has its own division. On one building is inscribed, in golden letters, "Weaving;" on others, "Dyeing," "Mill-building," "Lock-making," and so on. The masters employed are all Germans. The institution is also made use of to furnish models of all newly-invented machines, which are afterwards sent as patterns into the interior. One of the German directors who showed us the place was well content with the docility of the Russians. "But there is one mischievous word," said he, "which will for ever hinder them from reaching perfection in anything, and that is 'Nitshevo' (It is no matter), the use of which no Russian can be persuaded to leave off."

If a problem is to be solved, the Russian is always ready with his "Nitshevo," which acts as a constant impediment to any progress of a solid and enduring kind, which demands time and labour. On the other hand, it must be confessed, the Russian's "Nitshevo" helps him through a thousand difficulties.

The schools for the female sex are scarcely less numerous in St. Petersburg than those for boys. The most important is the great Institution of Smolna in the cloister before-named. The greater part of the eight hundred young maidens brought up there are nobles. Those of plebeian birth are in a separate building, have another dress, other attendance, and another table. This institution, and similar ones in other cities, are for the daughters of impoverished nobility what the corps of cadets is for their sons. If they do not know what to do with the sons, they put them into the cadet corps; if they cannot educate their daughters at home, they send them to one of these institutions.

All wealthy Russians prefer a private education for their daughters. The directresses of all these institutions, and particularly of that in St. Petersburg, are very often women of rank, the widows of general officers, &c. for whom a provision is thus made. The greater part are well-educated and high-born Livonian ladies of German descent. These ladies are held in no small consideration; and those who with us would be simple teachers have here almost the rank and dignity of governors of provinces.

The yearly cost of the Institute of Smolna is seven hundred thousand rubles, or nearly one thousand for each young lady, for which one might expect something brilliant. It is undeniable that all that is capable of outward polish receives it in no small degree; but the light is a borrowed light without warmth: a light possessing, no doubt, a certain outward charm, but destitute of that fruitful and life-giving power which is the more to be de-

sired, because the greater part of these young ladies are destined to be governesses, to carry the seeds of mental cultivation into the bosom of their country.

The Smolna Institute is perhaps the only one of its kind in the world; nowhere else, perhaps, is there collected, under one roof, so much noble blood, in such fresh, youthful veins. There might be a book written from the interesting stories to be gathered from the annals of this establishment. Unfortunately, the fair creatures appear but rarely in public. Their way of living resembles that of the cloister. Now and then, indeed, on high festival days, a long train of carriages-and-six are seen to defile before the gates, to indulge the fair chamber-flowers with a mouthful of fresh air.

Besides these public imperial institutions, there are, of course, in St. Petersburg, as elsewhere, a multitude of private schools, in which business is carried on in a right manufacturing spirit. It is a common thing for a mother to place her daughters in one of these, on condition that their education is to be finished in two or three years; that is, they must speak French, and play a symphony of Spontini. The more quickly the schoolmistress undertakes to dispatch the business, the greater pecuniary advantages are afforded her.

The examinations in such establishments are the most showy spectacles that can be imagined. For a fortnight before, the house is cleaned and trimmed and adorned; and for two months before, the practising and learning by heart goes on unweariedly, that all may go off smoothly on the great day. The mothers, sisters, and aunts, go in state in their coaches-and-four. The scientific part of the examination is followed by a concert, at which the pupils perform; and then a ballet, in which they display their skill in the dance. After all this the division of the prizes takes place, amid the uproar of trumpets and kettle-drums, and the whole concludes with a supper and a ball, whereupon the parents drive home again, enraptured with the intellectual improvement of their children.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE BUTTER-WEEK.

THE festival of Easter, a great one with all Christian communities, is particularly distinguished in the Russian-Greek Church; so much so, indeed, both in reference to the time it lasts and the pomp of its celebration, that all other holidays sink to nothing before it. Even as spring commonly sends many fine days as forerunners to announce its approach, so the Easter festival, "*the festival*," as a Russian calls it, is preceded by a whole series of smaller festivities, and succeeded again by a kind of epilogue; and these holidays, taken all together, stretch over no inconsi-

derable portion of the year—over nearly two months. If we reflect that a Russian spends a sixth part of his life in keeping Easter, and that all the joys, sorrows, privations, business, work, and play of the whole Russian people, during so considerable a portion of time, are determined by the festive occasion, it must be worth while to take a nearer view of a festival of so important a character and so wide an influence.

The Easter festival itself begins in the middle of the night of the Saturday in Passion-week, and its joys are loud and incessant through the eight following days. This centre of festivity is preceded by a seven weeks' fast, as a preparation for the feast, and before the seven weeks' fast comes an eight days' feast as a preparation for the fast. All these spring merry-makings may be thus divided into three consecutive celebrations.

Firstly, eight days' drinking and carousing, called by the Russians "Masslinitza" (Butter-week).

Secondly, seven weeks' fast, called, to distinguish it from the other fasts, "Velikoi post" (the great fast).

And, thirdly, Easter itself and its attendant train.

In the great world of St. Petersburg the approach of the great fast is announced by the balls and other carnival revels coming fast and furious, even as early as the beginning of February. For the mass of the people, the sports and pastimes with which they take leave of roast-meat and other pleasures are all pressed into one week, the "butter-week," as it is called, which falls generally in the middle or towards the end of February.

The butter-week contains the quintessence of all Russian festivity, and, except the Easter-week, there is no week in the whole year which offers to a St. Petersburgher such an abundance of earthly enjoyment as this. Firstly, as its name implies, the week is one of butter; butter is eaten instead of oil, which must be substituted during the fast-days. The Masslinitza may be literally said to be redolent of butter. The favourite dish of this season is composed of blinni, a kind of pancake baked in butter, served up with a sauce of melted butter, and eaten with caviare. The blinni belong peculiarly to the butter-week, and are baked at no other time of the year, but at this season they are served up punctually at every breakfast. In St. Petersburg they are to be had in perfection at the Russian Coffee-house, kept by Mr. —; unfortunately I have forgotten the name of this excellent person, but the taste of his blinni is fresh in my recollection.

After a butter-week breakfast of blinni, nothing is more agreeable than a walk to the "katsheli," or swings, the usual amusement enjoyed between breakfast and dinner during the butter-week. It is the only one in which all classes of society partake in common, from the head of all, the enthroned summit of their Babylonian tower, down to the lowest and dirtiest of its base.

The Russians delight as much in all motion where the limbs

are at rest and the body changes place by means of a machine, as they eschew all corporeal exercise which keeps the muscles in play. Hence their pleasure in the Russian mountains as they are called; in swings, sledge-driving, see-sawing on elastic planks, whirling through the air on roundabouts, &c. These are amusements in which a Russian's delight is part of his very nature, and they are enjoyed alike by prince and peasant. The fibres of the muscular system of the Russian are sluggish and unelastic; gymnastic exercises are nowhere more neglected. Their blood is voluptuous, their nervous system excitable; hence this swinging and gliding, this flying and floating, without any effort on their own part, are peculiarly to their taste.

Their inventions of this kind are innumerable; but the chief and crown of all Russian pleasures for the people is that expressed by the favourite word *katsheli* (swings), which includes all similar pastimes.\*

For the erection of the *katsheli* of the butter-week they choose a large and particularly long piece of ground, which is never wanting in the extensive Russian towns. In St. Petersburg the icy floor of the Neva was formerly in use; but since the accident of some years ago, when the ice gave way under the pressure and swallowed up a multitude of the swingers, the Admiralty Square has been the chosen spot.

Long trains of sledges, laden with beams and planks, are seen moving for days in that direction; and soon, under the strokes of the ready Russian hatchet, theatres, and other wooden buildings which recal the palaces of St. Petersburg one hundred and forty years ago, are reared amidst the splendid edifices of the Admiralty, the War-office, the Senate and Synod Houses, &c. These booths are erected in long rows: among them are theatres capable of holding some thousands; and these ephemeral structures, aping the magnificence of stone buildings, are decorated with galleries, pillars, balconies, &c. At one of these theatres I saw several hundreds busily at work, and swarming like so many ants: with their hammers, saws, and hatchets, they afforded no uninteresting spectacle in themselves, even before the stage had been prepared for the show.

To foreigners, the most striking of these preparations are the ice mountains and the method of their construction. A narrow scaffold is raised to the height of thirty or more feet, on the top of which is a gallery, ascended on one side by wooden steps; on the other is the great descent, very steep at first, and gradually declining till it becomes level with the ground. It is formed of

\* When a Russian family removes into the country for the summer, the first thing done for the amusement of the company is to repair the old swings and to erect new ones. Scarcely has spring set in when the peasants throng to the birch woods, and, bending down the elastic branches of the trees, form them into swings, where the young people of both sexes pass their leisure, singing and swinging. In some neighbourhoods there are public swings, where old and young lounge and swing for hours.



huge square blocks of ice, laid upon planks. Under a few strokes of the hatchet the beautiful solid crystal masses assume a regular form, and water is thrown over the whole from time to time, which cements, or rather ices, the blocks together. Where it is level with the ground, dams of snow are formed on either side, and the gully between is filled with water, which, freezing smooth as glass, lengthens the slide. Two such ice mountains stand always opposite one another, so that their paths, only separated by the snow-dams, run parallel to each other.

The English say that they invented these ice mountains. They have probably improved the mechanical part; but the amusement itself is an ancient and a national one, and is practised over all Russia. In the court-yards of most of the great houses in St. Petersburg there are such ice mountains erected for the amusement of the children; and even in the halls of some of the wealthier Russians, elegant "rutschbergs" are to be found, with this difference, that the slide is made, not of ice, but of polished mahogany, or of some other smooth wood, down which the little sledges glide with great rapidity. There is a mahogany "rutschberg" even in the imperial palace. In every town and village these slippery declivities are crowded with youths and maidens, rushing down with the swiftness of arrows. The sledges are made of ice, dexterously shaped into boats. In the hollow they lay straw to sit upon, and in front a hole is bored for a rope. In the climate of Russia these sledges are lasting enough. I saw, one morning, in St. Petersburg, a striking instance of how much these ice mountains form a national amusement. I was by chance very early in a distant quarter of the city, and observed, mounted on the roof of a small building, a number of people, servants, women, and children, whose slippers and floating hair betrayed that they had not long left their beds. They seemed busy about something, and I concluded there must be a chimney on fire, or something of that kind. No such thing: they had formed a snow mountain from the roof to the ground, and in a few minutes down went the whole company, shouting for joy, on a straw mat, which did duty *pro tempore* for a sledge.

When all the booths, mountains, and swings in the Admiralty Square are firmly fixed (that is, for the temperature of St. Petersburg, the greater part of the pillars having no other foundation than a hole in the earth filled with snow and water, which holds them as firm as a rock, unless the St. Petersburg February belies its nature), the fun begins on the first Sunday of the "butter-week," and then the gliding and sliding, swinging and singing, whirling and twirling, tea-drinking and nut-cracking, that make up the "Masslänitz," go merrily on for the eight stated days.

Tea and nuts are the staple comestibles at a Russian katshell. The tea-sellers stand with their tables at the doors of the theatres and booths, arranged in the same way as they are found at

the corners of the streets in the towns. In the middle stands a large machine, from whose chimney a column of steam curls upwards from morning till night. Round about are a multitude of teapots, of all sizes, in which you may have double, single, or half portions of tea. In general only a glass of tea is asked for. Behind his table, stamping and slapping his hands, stands the seller, bawling, unceasingly, "Gentlemen, will you not please to take a glass of warm tea?" Off goes his hat to every one who looks at him; and as he has little doubt that tea is wanted, he often begins to fill the glass at once, inquiring only, "Is it your pleasure with cream?" The Russian in general drinks it with a slice of lemon instead. Or, "How will you take the sugar?" For the real Russian custom is to bite off a piece of sugar before taking his tea; only those who affect foreign manners put the lump in at once. Yet more numerous than the tea-sellers are the dealers in nuts. Their tables, standing under tents, and inclined towards the street, are divided into compartments filled with all kinds of nuts: Oräkhi (hazel nuts), Vallotski and Gratskeski oräkhi (Italian and Greek nuts), Ukrainski oräkhi (Ukraine nuts), and Funduki, the largest kind of hazel nuts, equal in size to a pigeon's egg.

However many these merchants may be, they seem all busily employed, and seldom lay aside their scales, or the shovels out of which they offer samples of their wares. In a few days the snowy floor of the Admiralty Square is regularly paved with nutshells, and looks as if a whole army of nut-crackers had encamped there.

Nuts, sweetmeats, and honey-cakes, are the only eatables to be had. Eating-houses, wine and brandy shops, are not allowed on the elegant square of the Admiralty, as they might give rise to indecorous scenes. A honey-cake may be eaten with grace, and so may a *boubon* presented by a lover to his mistress: even a nut may be tolerated, if nibbled at squirrel-fashion, and not demolished by an uncivil crash and a grimace. Cakes and tea may be nipped and sipped in public, but hunger and thirst let every animal satisfy in his own lair.

It struck me as odd enough that the Russian street merchants offer everything to everybody.\* Either very elegant people must buy very inelegant wares, or the sellers must be so persuaded of their excellence, or so bewitched by the vision of a few possible copeks, that they do not perceive how little chance they have of finding customers in such a class.

It has always appeared singular to me that there are so few

\* A thousand times I have been offered "gräshneviki," a disgusting kind of fast-cake, baked in stinking oil, and other delicacies of that sort, with "Ugodno'sa?" (Will you please to buy the very best cakes?) And often I have felt inclined to answer, "Booby! don't you see I am a gentleman, and do not devour such filth?" but when I looked at the smiling face, the courteously lifted hat, and heard the ready jest, I could only reply, "Thank you, my merry friend; keep them for yourself."

Bajoccios and Polcinellos at a Russian Katsheli, as no people are readier in satire and *persiflage*, or in imitating the oddities and peculiarities of others. The slightest anecdote related by a Russian of the lower class is always accompanied by the liveliest mimicry, and on a thousand occasions he shows himself as a ready speaker and actor. Nevertheless it is a fact that all the harlequins and jesters who travel about the Russian fairs are foreigners, chiefly Germans and Italians. The greater part of these worthies are stupid enough, like many a journalist, whose profession makes it daily incumbent on him to show his wit. The crowd follow, however, laughing aloud wherever the music from the balcony of a theatre announces that such a one is about to exhibit. Perhaps the very peculiar Russian spoken by these Neapolitans and Hamburgers may make them comic in their own despitc, for it is certain that the natives seem excessively diverted by them.

Among the Petersburg Bajoccios, however, there was one who had a great fund of humour, but he was a native Russian.

#### THE GULANIE.

In the front of the booths and theatres, swarming with the tea-drinking, nut-cracking pedestrians, there is always a broad space reserved for the equipages of the grandees, who make their appearance about noon to see the fair. A universal driving in carriages takes place regularly in the "butter-week" at the Katsheli, the Easter-week, and on the first of May, throughout Russia. On their estates the wealthy Russians and their guests enjoy these "gulanies" in the evening; everything that can be called horse or vehicle is put in requisition: droschkies, caleches, chaises, landaus, hunting and provision carts, are mounted by the whole domestic population, and away they go coaching it through the country.

The enormous number of equipages in a Russian city, where, from a tailor of any eminence upwards, everybody keeps one, render these gulanies very amusing. The luxury in this respect is greater in fact in some provincial cities than in the two capitals, as in the former there is no prohibition of four or six horses for certain ranks, and every one is at liberty to make his team as long as he likes, or as he can.

The splendid horses of a Russian equipage do not, however, show to so much advantage in the slow parade step to which they are confined by the throng of carriages on such occasions as the katsheli, as they do when going at their usual speed. The horses are not so round in form as our Holstein and Mecklenburg breed, nor have they the superb manes and tails of the Andalusian race, nor did they seem to me to step well together. The enormously long traces, too, necessarily drag on the ground in a walk. They are like the ostrich, which makes no very pleasing

figure in walking, but which, running at full speed with outspread union, seems borne on the wings of the wind.

The merchants are known by their brightly-furbished caleches, drawn by two black horses, with their manes plaited into a multitude of little tails. The foreign ambassadors generally adopt the Russian style in the number and caparison of their horses. The carriages go so slowly that their contents may be contemplated at leisure: fair young maidens, with their pretty French governesses; countesses and princesses, enveloped in their sables and silver fox furs, reclining at their ease and surveying the crowd through their eye-glasses; boys in the national costume with their tutors; here a corpulent merchant with his long beard, and his equally jolly spouse; there a bishop or metropolitan, meditating on the vanities of the world; then a foreign ambassador, then a nuncio from the Pope, reflecting on the increasing power of the northern heresy. Further on, twenty court-caleches, each with six horses, and filled with young girls: these are the damsels from the Smolnoi Convent: English merchants, German artists, French doctors, Swedish professors. Turks, Persians, Tartars, even Chinese, and last of all an emperor and his whole court.

A numerous corps of gendarmes are busily employed in keeping order among the equipages, which increase in number so greatly at last, that while one end of the line is turning on Peter's-place, round the rock of Peter the Great, the other is turning round the base of Alexander's column, a good English mile apart. Sometimes a carriage will attempt to get out of the line, to the grievous discomposure of the breathless gendarmes, who, however, behave very well in general, and without respect to persons. I once saw a warm debate arise between one and a first minister of state, who wanted to break the line. The coach-and-four got the better at last of the soldier, who was alone, and forced its way through. The poor defeated gendarme shook his head angrily when he saw there was no help, and called after the minister, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, my lord! This is the second time to-day that you have disturbed the order. Shame upon you, my lord!"

On the whole, the lower class content themselves with the very harmless amusements at the Katsiteli, except that here and there a few indulge perhaps too freely in their potations. "Forgive me, it is butter-week!" is then pretty generally admitted as an excuse. "Ah, sir! don't look so long at the picture, it is the last day of butter-week," pleaded an old soldier, who opened the door for me at Brulow's picture. He seemed pretty well charged at the time, I thought, but he assured me that he must have a glass or two more to enable him to encounter a seven weeks' fast. One must do the St. Petersburg police the justice to say that the streets are rarely disturbed by any scenes of brutal intemperance. The very quiet nature of

Russian intoxication may perhaps partly account for this. A Russian coachman is often as full as a bottle in a bin, and yet shows no sign of any deficiency till he fairly tumbles off his box.

#### THE BURNING THEATRE.

Amusing as it is to occupy a convenient place at this spectacle of the Katsheli, where the Admiralty Place is the stage, buildings like the Winter Palace, the Senate-house, and the War-office, serve as side scenes, and where the whole population of St. Petersburg appear as actors, still it is difficult to forget that the festive scene has witnessed two most tragical occurrences: the one was the giving way of the ice on the Neva, when so many found a watery grave in the midst of their thoughtless merriment; the other, and more recent, was the burning of the wooden theatre. I must confess, few narratives have excited in me more horror than those connected with the fire just alluded to. 'Thousands may die on the battle-field; we honour them, but their death fills us not with dread: they win a glorious name, and they die with honour. 'Thousands meet their end upon the sick bed; we weep for them, but it is the course of nature that they should die. But that thousands by mere accident, in the midst of sports, in the most thoughtless revelry, should bid adieu to this fair world, to all their plans and hopes, stifled in a miserable wooden booth like so many rats and mice, this is fearful, and reminds us too awfully of the feeble tenure by which we hold existence.

The wooden theatres at the Katsheli are some of them very large. One in particular generally surpasses all the others in this respect, and is capable of holding five thousand persons. In this it was that the fire took place when the scene was to represent some firework or illumination. At first those behind the scenes, hoping to extinguish the flames, said nothing about it; as they increased, the audience applauded loudly, supposing it to be the promised spectacle. Suddenly the Bajoccio rushed forward, with a look of horror, shouting aloud, "We are on fire! save yourselves, you who can!" The audience answered by loud laughter at the admirably feigned fear as they supposed it to be. Thereupon, as it was impossible for him to make himself heard, the director ordered the curtain to be raised, and a mass of flame and smoke became visible. Screams of horror burst from the thousands of throats whence loud laughter had issued just before. Each grasped convulsively those dearest to them, and rushed to the doors. These were but few, the size of the place considered, and a fearful length of time elapsed ere the foremost gave way to those behind. The flames in the mean time gained rapidly upon the pine planks around them, leaping from slip to slip, and already showing their fiery tongues among the dense mass of spectators. Most unfortunately it happened that one of the large folding-

doors opened inwards. By the pressure of the throng it was flung to, and could not be moved one way or the other. On the outside the attempts to rescue the poor victims were at first feeble, for who in the midst of gaudy dreams of such a fearful chastisement? Those within, in the mean time, compressed the anguish of years into a few minutes, as they stood breast to breast shrieking in vain their frantic "Forwards!" to those in advance. The whole mass were stifling, the flames leaping threateningly over their heads; yet they were only separated by a few thin boards from the free bright air, and in a few minutes more they might have rent asunder their fragile tomb with their hands and teeth. Fancy sickens at the contemplation of the suffering of those minutes; only one risen from the ashes could truly paint occurrences that rent asunder the cords of life when suddenly awakened from the slumber of thoughtless enjoyment to the wildest pitch of terror and despair.

The police would not at first allow of any individual effort for the rescue of the sufferers; a merchant who had seized a spade succeeded, however, in defiance of them, in dashing through a plank, and bringing nearly sixty half-suffocated creatures from this harlequin's hell. The worthy man was afterwards rewarded for his act of courage and humanity by an order, and, as he was poor, by a pension of two thousand rubles.

The terrible news spread through the town that Lepmann's theatre was on fire, and that thousands were struggling with the most horrible of deaths. The anguish became universal. The consternation of the city, the scenes of agony and transport that followed, must have been seen to be understood. The emperor, who had left the Winter Palace opposite at the first news of the fire, was met by shrieking and despairing women calling upon him to save their husbands, sons, and brothers; he could only answer, "My children, I will save all I can."

When the fire was got under, and life and flame within were extinguished together, the dreadful task began of digging out the bodies. The sight was beyond all conception terrible when the fallen beams were removed, disclosing the heaps of charred and stifled bodies, which were dragged out with hooks, like loaves out of an oven. Some were burnt to a cinder, others only roasted; of many the hair of their heads was only singed, while on others it was burnt off; their eyes were destroyed, their faces black and calcined, yet some were still decked with the gaily-coloured handkerchiefs and holiday clothes, which the thickness of the pressure had saved from injury! These were far more terrible to look on than those entirely burnt. In one part of the building that remained standing, a crowd of dead were discovered in an erect posture, like an army of shadows from the lower world. One woman was found with her head leaning over the front of the gallery, her face hidden in her handkerchief. A gentleman who saw the bodies brought out told me that he was

unable to touch food for three days after; and a lady who had glanced at the terrible spectacle from a distance was quite out of her senses for some days.

The number of those who perished was officially announced at three hundred, but I was told by one person that he himself had counted fifty waggons, each laden with from ten to fifteen corpses; and some people, who had every means of obtaining correct information, made an estimate, the amount of which I am unwilling to repeat, lest it should be thought improbable.

Some were brought to life again; many died afterwards in the hospitals from the injuries received. One little boy was found sitting quite unhurt under a bench, where he had crept when the falling fragments began to shower down fire and flame upon the heads of the doomed multitude. The beams and dead bodies had so fallen over him as to form a protecting roof against the flame and smoke, and there the child remained till he was dragged out.

On the following day public prayers were offered up for the souls of the sufferers, on the place that had witnessed the scene of their last agony.

#### THE GREAT MASKED BALL.

The upper classes take part, as we have seen, in the common amusements of the Katscheli, but it is only for a few hours at noon; they resort then to other diversions, and revel after their own fashion. To speak first of the theatres:—Many as there are in St. Petersburg, they are all in full play during the butter-week; while it lasts there is no rest for the poor actors. Towards the close of the week they play twice a-day, morning and evening, French, German, Russian, and Italian. In the great theatre (bolshoi theater) the great masked ball takes place in the butter-week, and this may also be reckoned among the popular diversions, since every well-dressed person is at liberty to go, whatever be his rank, the emperor himself holding it his duty to appear there.

I was present at the ball in the year 1837. The entertainment was to begin at eleven, and the play lasted till half-past nine. I was curious to see how the Russians, with their acknowledged quickness of execution, would change the theatre into a ball-room in so short a time. As soon as the last spectator had left (I was the only person who remained, leaning against a pillar of the imperial box), the great chandelier was raised, and darkness fell over the wide space. By degrees some hundred workmen appeared with lights, and, while one party began to clear out the pit and orchestra, another directly followed with beams and planks over the stage, and began with saws and axes to raise a din through which only now and then an order and directing

voice could be heard.. This wide dark space, this rasping and hammering, this carpentering, calling, bawling, and commanding, seemed like another chaos under me, whence some great birth was to proceed. As fast as the platform from the stage to the pit advanced, the carpenters were followed by a crowd of chattering women with brooms, sweeping aside the shavings and dust. On the stage a cloud seemed to descend from the air. It was a bale of silk and woollen stuffs, which was received beneath by creative hands. These, partly draping and partly sewing, quickly transformed the stage into a beautiful Turkish tent, open in front. A gallery for the musicians was no less quickly reared at the back of the tent, and at the sides benches for the spectators. In the front, as if by magic, the platform proceeded mean while to completion; and stairs were made to ascend to the boxes on either side of the imperial grand box, which, by taking away the doors, seats, and balustrades, were changed into passages. The clock struck ten, a quarter-past, half-past, and at every quarter the workmen had accomplished a part of their task; at a quarter to eleven the last sounds of the hammer and saw were heard. The floor was made, the supports were firm, the cloud of dust was cleared away; the ceiling opened, and the magnificent chandelier descended over the young creation of the decorated ball-room. At the same time, round the balustrades twinkled forth the thousand stars of wax-lights; a lacquey passed over the floor, scattering perfumes from a large vessel, as if he, the first man, were offering incense to the new sun of this young world, which was peopled as rapidly as it was created. At eleven the people came streaming in, and not only men and women, but animals too, frogs, birds, &c. and none of the customary characters of a masquerade were wanting. At half-past eleven the emperor entered, and the first music thundered forth. It was a chorus, accompanied by the whole orchestra. It is usual to open balls, which have any claim to nationality, with such a chorus, accompanied by the orchestra. The usual piece is the Russian national hymn, "For the Emperor and sacred Russia." As soon as the emperor appeared, all my thoughts of chaos and a new creation vanished; I had no longer eye or sense for anything else than this representative of a power that has not its like on earth. Wherever the emperor placed himself he seemed to regulate the movements of all around him, as a powerful magnet does iron. Everywhere a respectful circle of staring spectators formed round him, but were kept within their own orbits by some invisible power. Wherever he could, his imperial majesty mingled with his subjects, and went diligently up stairs and down stairs. The young ladies in dominoes flocked curiously about him, and these he took good-naturedly on his arm, and walked about with them, exciting them to jest with him. Many ladies, who cannot in any other way approach him, attend this ball, merely for the sake of hanging for once upon the emperor's arm. He never was at a loss



for an answer, but replied very graciously to all that was said to him. As I passed him once I heard the mask upon his arm say, "Ah! comme tu es beau!" "Oh, oui," answered the emperor, "but if you had seen what I was formerly!" Another mask said to him, "Il y a peu de dames aujourd'hui." "Oui, mais quant à moi, je suis content, je te prends pour cent." One fair lady, however, seemed to weary him with her obtrusiveness, and as he caught sight of one of his nobles, he fastened her upon his arm, saying, "Voilà, T——! une jolie petite dame pour toi!" The nobleman walked about with her for a while, and then took an opportunity of civilly getting rid of her. I was glad, for the poor belle's sake, that she was so closely masked.

Besides the emperor and many Russian nobles, there were several German princes present, and accident brought about, in the course of the evening, some curious conjunctions. For example, the heir of a German kingdom joined in the same group with the presumptive heir to a grocer's shop on the Prospekt; the emperor of all the Russias with a French governess; the finance minister of an empire of sixty millions of inhabitants with a merchant's clerk disguised as a frog. And again, in the same corner might be seen a throng of ambassadors and generals, natives of the ever-green isles of Albion, of Southern Scythia, and of the summits of the Caucasus; well-dressed mechanics, and Turkish merchants. It is only the common people, however, in Russia who play their parts well in masks. I have often seen Russian peasants or servants *improvise* a masquerade with great humour, but the great do not get through the thing so well. The greater part of the latter were in ordinary black coats, and even dominoes were rare among them. It is not considered genteel to assume a character. Those who wished to enter into the spirit of the thing seemed to feel constrained among the rational unmasked gentry, and the unmasked seemed to look down with much scorn on the harlequin jackets of the others. The emperor comes to please the public, and the ministers, generals, &c. come on the emperor's account; but otherwise the great world do not honour the place with their presence. Only in the boxes some of the first families appear for a short time, to have something new to say at the private balls to which they are going at a later hour.

When a Russian noble wishes to give *éclat* to his fête, his first step is to secure the presence of the emperor and empress as his guests. Every noble is at liberty to invite the emperor, who makes much less difficulty of visiting his subjects than would be exacted by the etiquette of most other courts. The fête-giver puts on his dress of ceremony and drives to court, where he signifies to the grand-master of the ceremonies that he wishes to give a ball, if it be the pleasure of the emperor and empress to honour it by their presence; and at the same time presents the list of the company invited, which is generally returned unal-

tered. Now and then a name is struck out, or the desire intimated that no foreigners be present, the emperor desiring for that night to be alone with his subjects.

A chief article of luxury on such an occasion is the display of a numerous retinue. At one given by Count Br——, a hundred servants in livery were stationed on the stairs alone. The servants of the house of course are not enough, and ten rubles an evening are paid on such occasions for a good-looking figure for the part. The liveries of course must be all new for the occasion; and at the count's fête fifty wore violet-coloured velvet trimmed with silver, and fifty purple velvet with gold, the colours of the lord and lady of the house. On every stair stood alternately an orange or lemon-tree, and velvet-clad domestics from the house-door to that of the saloon. The present empress is a great lover of flowers, consequently every ball in St. Petersburg presents a profusion of them. One room is generally arranged as a winter-garden, and rose-bushes and arbours of roses of every shade form inviting nooks for refreshment.

Abundant as the diversions are during the Russian carnival, they double and treble during the last days of the butter-week. Fast and furious waxes the revelry during the three or four days preceding the great fast. The schools break up, the public offices are closed, the great theatres give representations morning and evening, and the twelve Bajoccios on the Katscheli announce some novelty every five minutes; the rich give *déjeûners d'adieux*, which last till five or six in the evening, take a few hours' rest, and then make a new and brilliant toilet for a second ball at night. Amongst the common people, in the mean time, the drunkenness of the evening concludes the intoxication of the morning; the public, wherever it is to be seen, seems in the best possible humour, and applauds everything and everybody. The emperor and all his court drive about in their brilliant equipages; down rush the sledges from the ice mountains till the ice glows again; the swings are at full flight; the bells of the wooden houses in the roundabouts tingle without ceasing; the Bajoccios announce from hour to hour how long the Masslänitz has to last; nimbly rolls his lesson off the tongue of him who shows the lions and the boa-constrictor, that he may dispatch one set of customers and get as many more as possible. All the pulses of life beat prestissimo: all seem eager to drain the last drop in the cup of joy, until the hour of midnight strikes and proclaims the beginning of the fast. Every dancing couple is brought to a sudden halt; and every one departs homeward to sweeten the tediousness of the fast with the remembrance of the enchanting joys in which the last days of the carnival were brought to a close.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE GREAT FAST.

WHEN one enjoys roast meat, meat soups, milk, and eggs, every day and all days, as we other Christians do, we are only half aware how much savouriness and strength the animal kingdom lends to our food. Nothing but a Russian fast can properly teach one how excessively flat and insipid vegetables are without a mixture of animal food, and what a very secondary part they play in our kitchens. The severity of the Russian fast banishes not only flesh and fowl, but milk, eggs, butter, and even sugar, on account of the small mixture of animal substance used in the refining. Animal food is the basis of our whole kitchen, and vegetables appear with grace and propriety only as the companions of meat, as the wife appears to advantage only in the company of the husband. Soups made of quass and mushrooms, fish, and cakes flavoured with oil, tea and coffee with almond-milk, mushrooms again with cucumbers in vinegar; these are the dainties that succeed the fat blinni, rich pasties, cakes, and rôtis of the butter-week. Neither is wine nor any spirituous liquor permitted, whereby a cook might give some spirit to his mushroomed, fishy, oily, fasting sauces, or the tea-drinker to his watery beverage. The people of the lower class exclude even fish in the first and last weeks of the fast, as they do on the Wednesdays and Fridays in the remaining five. These two days, which must always take precedence of the others, are distinguished in the last week by total abstinence. The very strictly pious extend this additional severity of observance to the whole seven weeks, with a three days' total abstinence in the week before Easter. Even the upper classes observe the fasts much more strictly than they do in Catholic countries. The first and last weeks, with the Wednesdays and Fridays of the remainder, are generally religiously observed. The greatest number of infractions of the fast bear reference to the brandy-bottle: the very point in which abstinence would be most beneficial. Some maintain that the Russians drink as much of it during the fasts as at any other time. It is not, however, called brandy, but it is enjoyed under the disguise of all manner of euphonisms.

It is remarkable enough how carefully a Russian watches that nothing of an animal substance pass his lips when he has really made up his mind to fast in earnest. A young girl will throw away a whole cup of tea directly, if she smell that her French governess has put cream into it instead of almond-milk. Occasionally mothers take it on themselves to give their little ones a dispensation on the ground of indisposition. "You can't think how this disgusting fast does try one," said a youth to his tutor. "Last Easter I took the sacrament, and for fourteen days toge-

ther we had nothing but oil, flour, and fish, and had to go three times a-day to church. And then the everlasting standing, crossing, and kneeling; you have no notion how it affected me! But at Easter, there was the supper at my uncle's; I was not lazy there!"

After a fast-day breakfast, a walk on the Admiralty-place, to which people instinctively resort, is a most dismal affair. It is all scattered over with ruins of temporary houses and booths, the ground paved with nut-shells and orange-peel. The wooden horses of the roundabout stand idle, the gaily-decorated boats and swings lie shattered and heaped together like wood for burning, the smooth mirrors of the ice mountains are broken up with iron bars, and the poor merry-andrew, the Bajoccio, what has become of him—he that for days together seemed inexhaustible in fun and jest? It is melancholy to see how rational he looks as he pants and perspires under the burden of planks, the sad remains of his fool's palace. The thousand voices that stunned us but the day before are silent, or only employed in reckoning their gains or settling with their merchants. All are stretching, yawning, and shuddering at the joylessness of the long seven weeks before them.

The greater part of the public amusements, especially balls and plays, are strictly prohibited. Assemblies and *souirs*, without dancing or masking, take the place of the tumultuous ball; and as cows' milk is changed into almond milk, butter into oil, and flesh into fish, so plays become public declamations and improvisations; operas change into concerts, and the theatre, which must not act plays, is open for *tableaux vivants*. The seven fasting weeks, to the gay world are one long night, in which only the modest stars and moon faintly gleam, till all at once, like Apollo with his steeds of light, the bright sun of Easter breaks forth in full splendour. In the butter-week the dresses of the belles at a St. Petersburg party are glittering with a profusion of jewels; for the fists, the brilliant diamond is too glaring: the single row of pearls in the hair, here and there the modest turquoise peeping forth like a violet or forget-me-not, and coral ornaments for the arms and throat, are alone seen at the *réunions*, where conversation and song have displaced the waltz and Polonaise.\*

The fasting weeks are the golden harvests of the musical artists; every evening some new singer or violinist is announced

\* In no country are so many diamonds and other precious stones displayed as in Russia. Not only every Russian lady of rank has her jewel casket, in which, besides those ready set, she has a quantity of loose diamonds and pearls, to be arranged according to fancy at different times and places, but even the little girls have their caskets, containing dozens of rings, earrings, bracelets, &c. with which they are constantly decorated. How necessary they esteem them I learnt from the example of a newly-married couple, whose whole capital was six thousand rubles; of which three thousand were spent for jewels and ornaments, and the other three for beds, tables, and other furniture.

with recommendations from Vienna or Paris; and sometimes one will undertake alone to amuse the St. Petersburg public, which would before have tasked the art of a hundred high priests of Thalia. The best of the fast-time amusements are the *tableaux vivants*, which are given with great taste and magnificence, and I cannot understand why these representations should be confined to this one season.

The monotony of the fasts is now and then broken by the feast of some saint which may fall in this time. Happy the saint thus celebrated—he may reckon upon numerous adorers; and happy the child whose birthday occurs at this time—he may be sure it will be kept till his eightieth year with great joy and festivity: first by his parents, then by his brothers and sisters, by blood and marriage, and afterwards by his children and grandchildren. Family festivals are deemed innocent things, quite suitable to the seriousness of a fast, and therefore people try to make them as splendid as possible.

#### PALE SUNDAY FAIR.

Palm Sunday is another very agreeable interruption of the great fast. The children's festival, which in Germany occurs at Christmas, is in Russia celebrated on Palm Sunday. The scene of this pretty fair is under the arcades of the great "Gostinnoi Dvor," and in the adjoining streets. Huge bundles of twigs are brought into the city by the peasants, some very small, while others are great branches, almost as big as young trees, to suit the various amounts of piety; for while the severe orthodox father buys a whole tree, which he gets blessed in the church, and afterwards suspends under the pictures of his saints, his elegant son contents himself with a delicate little twig, which he cracks like an ordinary whip. To these natural foundations are appended the palms which art has constructed to aid the poverty of a northern April. The bare twig is furnished with an abundance of leaves and flowers, some copied from nature, and some the productions of a lively fancy. Some are made like the branches of fruit-trees, and hung with all the fruits of the East imitated in wax, with waxen birds and waxen angels fastened to the boughs with sky-blue ribbons.

A great number of natural flowers are also brought from the numerous hot-houses of St. Petersburg: centifolias, moss-roses, violets, hyacinths, and orange flowers, for the elder sisters, who are not content to leave the fair with none but artificial flowers. As flowers alone would not be acceptable to children, sweetmeats and playthings are also to be had in abundance. The Russians have a peculiar talent for making figures and toys out of the most worthless materials in the world; straw, shavings, ice, dough, they turn all to account. One old discharged soldier had made a model of a full-rigged frigate; all sails were set, and it

was so large, that as he walked about with it on his head, it seemed as if the vessel were sailing away with him towed at the cable. Another seemed to prefer the more peaceful reminiscences of his childhood to those of the service, and had formed a complete Russian farm-house, with all its appurtenances, out of wood and straw. In the farm-yard a man was at work upon a sledge, perhaps his old father; an old woman was at the door with her pails, preparing to go to the spring; and among the cows in the cow-house sat a young girl, evidently his mother and sister. Another very favourite model is that of a church, with all the cupolas, turrets, crosses, and chains peculiar to the exterior of a Russian church. Churches occupy a large space in a Russian imagination; and where we, with a pencil or piece of chalk in our hands, in an idle moment, would write initials or draw a caricature, a Russian would be almost sure to draw a church. All Jerusalem is sometimes to be seen, surrounded by its palm groves, and the multitude entering the city with palm-branches in their hands. The servants of a family make numbers of such things for the children; and what the dexterous fingers of the lacquey form out of paper, the cook fashions of sugar. The rich uncles and godfathers send the children palm-branches at this feast that are sometimes worth some hundreds of rubles. On such branches the angels are perhaps gold, the leaves silver, and the hollow waxen fruits filled with costly trifles.

The stalls for the sale, or rather the exchange, of saints' pictures, images, &c.—for the Russian must not *sell* the picture of a saint, though he may exchange it, which he does sometimes for money—are also provided with a multitude of amulets, crosses, &c. of all possible sizes, forms, and materials; and if a person is not inclined to load himself with a heavier cross, he at least takes one of gingerbread, which he has the advantage of being able to eat when he is tired of carrying it.

The dealers in plaster-of-Paris figures throng here in greater numbers than in their Italian fatherland. I saw one morning an odd rencontre between two servants, one with a basket full of paper shavings, out of which peeped the figure of Goëthe, after Rauch, with his hands behind his back; while the other had bought for his master a plaster Napoleon: a very fashionable figure, by-the-by, among Russian officers, from the Caucasus to Siberia. The latter held his Napoleon in his arms, and, as the lowest Russians are always full of compliments, he was making a profusion of bows, which Napoleon was forced to make with him. It looked exactly as if the ex-emperor were complimenting Goëthe, who listened gravely to him, buried up to his chin in cuttings of paper.

As this is a regular national festival, the emperor holds it his duty to honour it with his presence, and brings all his sons and daughters with him. On a bright spring day, such as yesterday,

Petersburg April sometimes affords, it must be confessed that a walk here, among all these significant and insignificant people, affords one of the most amusing spectacles of the season; it is, as it were, the morn of the night of the great fast.

On "Verbnoi Sabbota" (Palm Saturday) a great procession takes place, in imitation of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, and all stream into the churches, carrying branches and singing. The priests sprinkle branch and branch-bearers with holy water, and add a blessing into the bargain; the greater number then carry away their palms. Whole groups are to be met with carrying them about till late in the evening: father, mother, and children, with the servants walking behind them; even the infant in the nurse's arms has a palm-twig, sprinkled and blessed, thrust into its tiny fist. As for the boys, the best use they can make of their twigs is to flog each other with them, which they do handsomely. Some of the more pious leave their branches till Sunday in the church, and many suspend them over their beds, ascribing all sorts of healing influences to the leafless twigs. The children also cherish theirs carefully, but for another purpose. It is the custom throughout Russia to punish those who sleep too late on Palm Sunday to attend early mass, by flogging them with the palm-branches. Girls and boys are all so eager to administer this discipline that they lie awake half the night thinking of it; and as soon as the day breaks, they are running about in bands in search of the sleepers, whom they punish while singing this verse:—

" Verba blot!  
Blot da floss;  
Ya ne bin;  
Verba blot!"

(The rod strikes! strikes to weeping; I strike thee not; the rod strikes!)

This custom prevails throughout Russia, and the imperial children exercise the privilege as eagerly as those of lower rank.

#### THE EASTER EGGS.

The Easter eggs play a very important part at this time of the year. St. Petersburg, lying in a plain little peopled either by man or barn-door fowls, must procure her eggs from a great distance. Moscow, in particular, supplies large quantities. On a very moderate calculation there cannot be less than ten millions used at Easter in this capital; for, as it is always customary at Easter, on greeting an acquaintance, to press an egg into his hand, many an individual may consume his hundreds.

Nothing is more amusing than to visit the markets and stalls where the painted eggs are sold. Some are painted in a variety of patterns; some have verses inscribed on them, but the more usual inscription is the general Easter greeting, "Christohs

vosskress" (Christ is risen), or "Eat and think of me," &c. The wealthier do not, of course, content themselves with veritable eggs dyed with Brazil wood, but profit by the custom to show their taste and gallantry. Scarcely any material is to be named that is not made into Easter eggs. At the imperial glass-cutting manufactory we saw two halls filled with workmen employed on nothing else but cutting flowers and figures on eggs of crystal. Part of them were for the emperor and empress to give away as presents to the courtiers. As the latter receive many of these things, they, of course, give them away again to their friends and favourites, who, the next Easter, bestow them in their turn elsewhere; so that these eggs often travel to amazing distances. I happened to know the history of one which came from the imperial palace, passed through numberless hands of high and low, till its last possessor, having let it fall on a stone, pitched the fragments into the Black Sea.

The wax-fruit makers and confectioners produce some pretty pieces of workmanship, in elegant boxes filled with eggs of all sizes in regular order, from the mighty ostrich-egg down to the nightingale's, and all in wax and sugar. Some are *bombonnières*, and very costly presents are also offered in egg-shells; some are transparent, and, in place of the yolk, contain little fairy *bouquets*, and some have a magnifying-glass neatly fitted in, and display houses and trees formed in wax, pictures of saints, and tiny angels couched on roses. A considerable trade is carried on in such commodities at Easter from St. Petersburg, which returns in imitative sugar the raw produce of the hen-house received from the provinces.

#### THE THREE LAST DAYS OF PASSION-WEEK.

On Holy Thursday the occurrences of the day are read out of the four Evangelists after mass. The priest stands in the middle of the church at a desk, on which burn three candles. The churches are in general thronged, and as every member of the congregation holds a taper in the hand, they make an uncommonly cheerful appearance. The poor take a pride in having these tapers as thick as they can get them, and may often be seen with beautifully gilded tapers which may have cost them a couple of rubles each. They are burnt throughout the Thursday evening, extinguished on Good Friday, and kindled again at midnight on Easter-eve. The streets of the towns and villages, which are in general unlighted, are then gay with wandering illuminations as the taper-bearers go from one church to another; and that the tapers may not be extinguished, which is looked upon as an ill omen, they are carried in paper lanterns.

On Good Friday there is no further ceremonial than the erection of a kind of tabernacle in the churches; in general, a mere box laid upon tressels and covered with a cloth; on the upper side of the cloth, the body of the Redeemer is represented in



painting, embroidery, or half-relief. This tabernacle stands there till Easter-eve, with only so many lights as are necessary to show the objects. The doors of the churches stand constantly open, and the people go in and out to kiss the simulated wounds. The lower class of people go through all the forms of prostration, crossing, and kissing, with great fervour and devotion, and we must suppose the most scandalous hypocrisy if we believe this to be all mere acting. Many, I am certain, are keenly impressed with the sorrows that the Saviour bore for them, and feel the deepest grief for the death endured. No priest can have taught them thus to sadden their countenances, or to give such a devout earnestness to their demeanour, or to draw such deep sighs from their overladen bosoms.

Touching as this appearance of piety is among the poor, there is something exceeding naïve, and even comic, in the devout exercises of the upper, or rather the secondary, class of ladies, for the highest have too much tact and knowledge of the world to expose themselves to ridicule. But the wives of provincial nobles, and those of the richer merchants, drive about the whole Saturday from one church to another to pay their visits of devotion, with the same self-complacency as they do those of ceremony at the palace twenty-four hours later. "*Attendez, ma chère,*" one of them will say to her *dame de compagnie*, who keeps at some distance, and has her own thoughts of the matter in her French head, as she watches her patroness approach the tabernacle, and with great decorum and politeness, and the assistance of her footman, perform the due number of genuflexions and kissings. In this way the devotee makes her round of the churches, till, getting wearied after a time, she exclaims "*Skutsho!*" (It is very tiresome!), and drives home again to superintend the preparations for the grand midnight or morning feast that is to be celebrated in her house. For now, heaven be praised! the oil and fish feeding is over, and the savoury steams from every kitchen announce the coming joys of Easter-day.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### EASTER-EVE.

IN the last days of the fast, expectation is strained to the highest pitch. On the Saturday before Easter-day the thermometer of religious inspiration falls below zero. The lights, the singing, the bells, all the pomp of divine service, are consigned to repose. The devout are thoroughly exhausted with abundant kneeling and listening to the long readings.\* Many have had nothing

\* There are no seats in any Russian place of worship, either public or private; the whole service is listened to standing or kneeling. In very rare cases an elderly lady of rank will have a chair in her private chapel. Even the emperor stands all the time of the service.

whatever to eat for the last three days, and are really half-starved. The churches are as dark as the grave; no priest shows himself on the Saturday evening till midnight.

It is customary for one of the congregation to take on himself the office of reading from the Gospel. A desk, on which lies an open Bible, is placed in the middle of the church; one of the lower classes, who can just spell out Slavonian, will advance, light his taper, and read till some one else advances to release him. Except the beautiful church singing, no custom of the Russian church seemed to me so really touching and edifying as this public reading.

As I was making the tour of the churches on Easter-eve in 1837, I found in the church Spass Preobrayenskoï, a scarred veteran soldier, standing at the desk reading with his taper in his hand. Around stood a number of children with folded hands, listening as attentively as the elders. In another it was a long-bearded, venerable old man, who, in a trembling voice and feeble tone, but with great earnestness and devotion, read aloud the history of the sufferings of the Redeemer, to a crowd of old people, youths, and children of both sexes, whose attention was never once diverted by the constant flux and reflux of the worshippers of the sacred tabernacle. I found a like spectacle in every church I visited, and was never tired of contemplating the edifying and heart-moving spectacle. It is a pity that the clergy do not oftener let the Scriptures out of their hands, and allow the congregation to take part in the administration of the sacred office. Religion would certainly be the gainer. All priests, without exception, contract, by daily repetition of the same things, a certain workmanlike dexterity and indifference in the execution of their duty, that deprives it of all influence on the heart. On the other hand, the emotion and sympathy of the unprofessional reader are visible and unfeigned, and the doctrine and teaching, coming directly from the heart, appeal directly to it. Even when the reader is not a good or fluent one, the effect is not injurious, but rather the contrary. When he hesitates, or approaches his taper nearer, the listeners seem yet more attentive, and when the right word comes, it makes the more certain impression. They seem to say to themselves, "Yes; so it is. That is the right word: the truth!"

It is strange that the reformers in our church did not make use of so mighty a lever to piety as this congregational assistance might be, but left the people during divine service in a state of inactivity that must tend to impair devotion. If not always, perhaps, but on certain occasions, one of the congregation were at liberty to ascend the pulpit, the wholesome influence of family devotion would be imparted to public devotion, and a feeling of brotherhood would be infused into the congregation.

Towards midnight the throng increases. In St. Petersburg the court appears in the imperial chapel in full dress; and in the

provinces the governor, with all his adjutants and officers in their splendid uniforms, attend the cathedral. The priests begin a mass which is but languidly performed or listened to, till all at once, at the hour of midnight, the whole scene changes. The golden door of the "Ikonostas" (the middle door of the pictorial wall that separates the Holy of Holies from the rest of the church) flies open, and the song bursts forth, "Christohs vosskress! Christohs vosskress ihs mortvui!" (Christ is risen! Christ is risen from the dead!) At the same moment the illumination of the church is completed, not only the lamps and great chandelier, but the countless tapers in the hands of the congregation, which have been held hitherto unlighted. Whilst the chief body of priests, still singing "Christohs vosskress," remove the pall with the corse, two others in their richest dress pass through the church with censers in their hands, repeating the joyful words, and stopping before the shrine of every saint to swing the censer and make their genuflections, and before every group of devotees to bestow their blessing. The congregation shake hands, and kiss all with whom they have the most distant acquaintance. "Christohs vosskress," says the saluting friend, and "Voyst venno vosskress?" (Is he really and truly risen?) answers the saluted. This last sentence appears to be literally that spoken two thousand years ago, by the disciples hastening to the empty tomb of Christ, and brings before our eyes, in the liveliest manner, the wonder and excitement of the first Christians who handed it down to us. The singing of the priests mean while continues. They also embrace each other; the bishop, metropolitan, or whatever priest of the highest rank may be present, now places himself before the Ikonostas, and bestows on every member of the congregation who approaches him his blessing and a kiss, with the words "Christohs vosskress." The churches are illuminated without as well as within, and all the bells in the city ring out at once. In St. Petersburg many of the streets and public buildings are illuminated; rocket after rocket rushes along the sky, and the cannon boom at intervals, amidst the countless bells and voices echoing each other from all sides of the broad Neva.

Amid all this tumult, a procession headed by the priests, all bearing tapers and torches, passes round the church, and then the last ceremony, the blessing of the food, takes place about three o'clock in the morning. The rich, who have the means of consecration at hand, do not find it necessary to carry their food to church, and moreover they are sometimes quite content with the species of consecration a good cook bestows; but the poor cannot enjoy their Easter breakfast till it has been blessed by the priest: perhaps they have a foreboding how ill it is likely to sit upon the stomach weakened by long fasting.

The spectacle in the church is most extraordinary. They range all the dishes in long rows through the whole church, leaving space enough between the rows for the priests to pass,

till the increasing numbers compel them to form the lines without the church, and even a good way round. The huge oddly-shaped loaves called *kulitsh*, the towers of white cheese, into which I know not how many coloured leaves of spice are interwoven, the former decorated with flowers, the latter bearing a burning wax taper on its summit, the heaps of red-coloured eggs, lumps of sugar, pots of honey, plates of preserved fruit; all these painted, illuminated, many-coloured, strange-looking eatables, and collected in such quantities, have so curious an effect, that one can hardly help supposing the important ceremonies are to end at last in child's play; one cannot help looking into the faces of the reverend goodies and white-bearded fathers, to see whether they are not masked children who will at last throw off their disguise, and, in the midst of all their flowers and fruits, end with a dance in honour of *Flora* and *Pomona*. It is not necessary to observe them long, however, to be convinced that these good child-like people are quite serious in their proceedings. As the priest advances, sprinkling to the right and left, and pronouncing the blessing, while his attendant keeps up a constant chant, the people press closer and closer, crossing themselves and keeping a sharp watch that their flowers and food get their due share of the purifying waters. "*Batiushka!*" is heard here and there, "*sdes moi pashka.*" (Father dear! my Easter dish has got none.) Breathless with haste, others come running up, and as they untie the cloth containing their dishes, supplicate a moment's delay from the priest, who is generally good-natured enough to comply.

The Russian Easter banquets are certainly the most peculiar things of the kind that can be seen, both from the time at which they are taken (the sun often rising on the dessert), and from the appearance and demeanour of the guests. Whole colleges and corporations come in gala dresses to pay their court; after the unvarying salutation, "*Christohs vosskress,*" eat something, and go away again. Thus the professors of a university pay their respects to the curator; the judges, secretaries, and other officers of the law courts, to their president, &c. All is bowing, congratulating, and kissing. The cooks and confectioners give themselves a world of trouble to prepare their dishes with some reference to the time. Lambs made of butter are often paraded in the middle of the table, the fleece admirably imitated in butter also; lambs of sugar, decorated with flags, crosses, &c. Many dishes appear in the form of an egg, which seems to be held almost as sacred. Some years ago, a court lady gave an Easter breakfast to the imperial family, at which every dish at table was served up in eggs. The soups sent up their savoury steam from gigantic ostrich eggs, furnished, as well as the other eggs for holding hot food, by the porcelain manufactory. Here eggs produced chickens full-grown and ready-roasted, and there a monstrous birth developed a sucking-pig; while pasties, puddings,

creams, game, fruits, and jellies, blushed through egg-shells of fine glass. Lastly, by way of dessert, eggs of gold paper were offered, containing almonds, raisins, and sweetmeats of all sorts.

To be thoroughly national, two dishes are indispensable at an Easter breakfast, paskha and kulitsh. Paskha is made of curds beaten hard, and served in a pyramidal form; the kulitsh is a thick, round, cylindrically-shaped white loaf, sometimes made with a multitude of little kulitshi sticking upon it, like young oysters on the back of an old one, with plums, consecrated palm-twigs, &c.; which latter always project a little from the crust. Both must be decorated with flowers and wax-lights; and if, in addition to these, a hard egg and a dram be swallowed, the common Easter breakfast of a Russian of the lower class has been taken, and you may go to sleep for some hours with a good conscience wherewith to begin the enjoyment of the Easter festivities.

Of these, beyond all dispute the most interesting (where a pair of pretty lips are concerned) is the Easter kiss. I will endeavour to give some idea of the enormous consumption of this saccharine article at this time of year.

In the first place, all members of a family, without exception, kiss each other: if the family consist only of ten individuals, there are at once ninety kisses. Then all acquaintance meeting for the first time at Easter, even where the acquaintance is but slight, would think it a breach of politeness not to kiss and embrace each other with the greatest cordiality. "The devil take you, Maxim!" I once heard an old woman exclaim to a young man, "can't you say 'Christohs vosskress,' and give me a kiss?"

If we suppose now that every person in St. Petersburg has, upon a very moderate average, a hundred acquaintances, more or less intimate, that calculation will give, for St. Petersburg alone, with its half million inhabitants, a sum total of fifty millions Easter embraces. Let us consider only on how large a scale many individuals must carry on the business. In the army every general of a corps of sixty thousand men must embrace all the officers, every colonel those of his regiment, and a select number of soldiers into the bargain. The captain salutes all the soldiers of his company, who are mustered for the purpose. The same in the civil department; the chief embraces all his subordinates, who wait on him in their gala dresses. Considering how numerous are the divisions and sub-divisions in a Russian bureau, the chief must have no little occasion for lip-salve on the following day; for, as far as I observed, these official caresses are by no means mere matters of pretence, as they are sometimes on the stage, but real downright smacks, such as might be exchanged by lovers. A subordinate officer has enough to do who has often a dozen grades above him; but as to the poor dignitaries, they must be fairly out of breath. Herein, of course, as in all other cases, the largest share of

business falls to the emperor's lot. Let us consider his numerous family, his enormous retinue, the countless numbers who come to salute him on Easter morning, those of the nobles whom he is more intimate with, and may meet by accident; and even then he has not done. On parade the whole body of officers, and some of the privates picked out for the occasion, are honoured with an imperial embrace, which is not refused even to the meanest sentinel of his palace, as he passes him on Easter Sunday.

As all these caresses are given and received with the greatest cheerfulness, and amidst smiles and hand-shakings, as if they saw each other for the first time after a long separation, or after some heavy and long-endured misfortune, it may be easily imagined how many gay and amusing scenes are passing in the streets and houses. "Christolis vosskress, Yefim Stephanovitch" (Christ is risen, Euphem Stephen's son), hawls one bearded fellow to another. "Voyst venno vosskress?" (Is he really risen?) Then they seize each other's hand, embrace heartily, and finish with "Padyóm v'kabak brat" (Let us go to the public-house, brother); and to the public-house they go, where the brandy runs as freely as the clear water in Mahomet's paradise. It is an exaggeration, however, to assert, as some travellers have done, that under the shield of "Christolis vosskress" any stranger is at liberty to salute any unknown fair one. It is true that, even in the higher circles, some elderly gentlemen will take advantage of the season, and give occasion for some *badinage* among the young ladies, though it is never taken amiss. I once saw, in a provincial town in Russia, the sentinel at the gate, after he had examined the basket or cart of the peasant girls, salute every one in a very grave and business-like manner, and he assured me that he did so throughout the week. The coachman and other male servants kiss the children of their masters without ceremony, but only the hands of the grown-up daughters; the domestics on these occasions fill their pockets with painted eggs, one of which is presented to every one they salute, or from whom a trifling *douceur* may be expected in return.

That all scenes at Easter are not quite so cheerful or so peaceable may be well imagined, when we consider how freely the *eau de vie* (it might more properly be named *eau de mort*) flows during this period. To be intoxicated at Easter finds excuse everywhere, and it is carried so far, in Little Russia particularly, that whole villages are often drunk at once. Of course, much scandal is caused thereby. Servants run away, or are sent away, on account of excesses committed at Easter. The German families complain sadly; many are left at this time altogether without domestic assistance, as there is no bridling a Russian at Easter; and yet, with all this universal uproariousness, there is certainly less crime committed than there would be anywhere else. A Russian Easter in England or Italy would be a regular period of bloodshed; but, owing to the natural good temper and peaceable-

ness of the Russian national character, there is here far more to excite laughter or repulsion than fear or indignation.

In the capital of the Ukraine, I was once passing the gate through which a crowd of persons of both sexes were staggering, and all as drunk as they could well be. As I stood still to look at them, and shook my head, one of the hindmost, in the same condition as the rest, approached me, and taking off his hat, "Drunk, sir; all drunk!" said he; "it is a holiday; forgive them, sir; pray forgive them; pray, sir, don't be angry; forgive us! God has given us a holiday." There was no getting rid of him till I gave him my hand, and promised to forgive what I as a foreigner could have no right to punish. Another time I saw, in another city, a drunken man take off his hat to the governor in the public square, fall on his knees, and, seizing the dignitary's hand, exclaim, "Ah, I'm drunk, your excellency! It is a holiday, but I beg you will have me beaten; I have drunk too much, indeed; pray, your excellency, do punish me!" Nor could the governor get rid of his singular petitioner till he had given him a reprimand.

But enough of these grosser matters; turn we rather to the countless throng of brilliant equipages that fill the streets, all driving, hurrying, flying to court, to kissing, to church, and to the Katsheli. Yes, the Katsheli; for in Easter-week it returns again with all its whirling, twirling, swinging, and nut-cracking. The ice-mountains and sledges are no more, but in their stead come oranges and ices.

In fact, to judge from the immense quantity of oranges that are to be seen heaped upon the stalls at Easter, one would think that the garden of the Hesperides lay directly before the gates of St. Petersburg, or that they grew throughout Russia like birch and pine trees. Whence they all come to be sold at so reasonable a rate I know as little as I do how all the champagne is procured, that is drunk in Russia as freely as if that province had been long a part of the Russian empire. It is a certain fact, however, that in Russia, to the very frontiers of Siberia, all the places where the fairs are held at Easter seem inundated with oranges and lemons.

The south is provided for by Odessa and Taganrog, but north and central Russia through the northern ports. The golden cargoes are generally landed at Libau or Reval, at the latter end of February or in March, and are transported from St. Petersburg as far south as Kharkoff, where the itinerant dealers proclaim the pyramids of oranges and lemons piled up on their heads as the genuine produce of St. Petersburg.

Ices are to be had, of course, the whole year through at the foreign confectioners', but they are first sold in the public places and streets at Easter. The custom of selling ices in the streets is unknown in Germany, but is favoured here by the cheapness of ice and preserved fruits. Like butterflies fluttering from the

chrysales, a number of young fellows who, a few days before, wrapped in greasy sheepskins, were vending their oily gräsh-niviki (hot cakes), now flaunt away in red flowered cotton blouses over black velvet trousers, with long white and red embroidered cloth slung over their breasts and shoulders, like the ribbon of an order. The ends serve to wipe their glasses, in which they offer their ices; and thus equipped they may be met with at Easter in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and indeed throughout Russia. They carry their ices in great cans filled up to the neck with rough ice, and thus hawk about their delicate mouth-cooling merchandise under the hottest sun.

The business which we are employed in affects, it is well known, our whole being and character, in a high degree, and so it is with these people. The same men whom I saw so taciturn and monotonous over their oil cakes in the fast days, are now all alive in their gay cottons, and full of jest and good-humour, while presenting their pink, snow-white, or coffee-coloured ices. One of them, who had his stand by the swings, was my particular friend; near him I often loitered to divert myself with his acting. I took the trouble one morning of writing down some of the eloquence with which he sought to allure his customers.

"Moye potshtenie!" (Your most obedient servant, sir!) he called out to a gentleman at a little distance who was not thinking of him and his ice; "what is your pleasure? ready directly. Oh! how hot it is to-day! one wants something to cool one! How! you will take vanilla? What, nothing! I am very, very sorry! Moroshniye, moroshniye, sami svashchye! ice, ice, the freshest, the coolest. Chocolate, vanilla, coffee, rose-ice, all of the very best. Who tastes my exquisite ice; my flower-bloom? (so he called one particular ice). My ice is like a poppy: come, my loveliest girl, will you taste my poppy ice?" (The girls of Little Russia wear in spring a number of showy poppies in their hair). "Taste it only! It is sweeter than the kiss of your bridegroom. You like it best mixed, perhaps? Good, dearest, mixed it shall be, like your cheeks, red and white: will you please to taste?"

And hereupon he hands the ice temptingly mingled in a graceful tapering mass of red and white. The girl looks embarrassed, but ends by taking the wooden spoon he flourishes in his right hand and eating the offered delicacy. "Zvätui zvetot." "Blooming flower, poppy bloom, vanilla blossom, coffee blossom! Who will take my most delicious ice? See here, my good old father! red, red as a rose, and yellow as gold. Ah! you simpleton, give your copper for my gold." (Here he puts a little in a glass and holds it up to the sun). "Ah! how superb! How I should like to eat it myself! But I am not rich enough. I can't afford it. Come, father, buy some of it, and then I can have a taste. There, take it, father, and much good may it do you! For your little son as well? Moroshniye! Ugh, how hot it is! I am half-melted. I must have some ice." (At the beginning of the Easter holidays.



in Russia this is a tolerably strong poetical exaggeration, as may well be supposed.) He then tastes a little, turns up his eyes, and raises his shoulders as if it were pure ambrosia. "Ha! good mother, what are you gaping at? Does it make your mouth water? Truly, I cannot bear to see you there melting in the sun before my eyes. There, try it." And he holds out his wooden spoon with a sample. The old woman laughs, must taste, and cannot get off under eight kopeks. And then the tempter begins his strain again, which is scarcely ended when the sun has already ended his course for the day.

During the whole of the Easter-week the churches stand constantly open, and even the golden doors of the sanctuary, which remain closed throughout the year, excepting at certain moments during divine service, now admit the gaze of all. The more pious, generally, hear a long mass every morning before they hasten to their amusements. The holidays are closed by a "final mass," at the end of which "the division of bread" takes place: a ceremony whose meaning I have not been able to find out. I believe it may be only a viaticum or souvenir of Easter, which the priest bestows upon the faithful. Large loaves are baked, the outer crust of which is coloured red and stamped with the words, "Christos vosskress ihs mortvui," in gold letters. These loaves are cut into small pieces; the priests fill some baskets with them, carry them to the railing round the altar, and throw down the bits of bread among the people, who stretch out their hands with eagerness. The pieces are anxiously examined to see who has got the letters. Those who obtain the characters forming the first word of the inscription hold it for a particular piece of good fortune; but the holders of the last word "mortvui" (death), on the other hand, are much grieved, and esteem it a very bad omen. This is natural enough. I must confess that I was glad when I caught some of the letters forming the "vosskress," and should have been inconsolable if "mortvui" had fallen to my share. These pieces of bread, like the palm branches, are laid up among other relics, on the table or shelf where the image of a saint rests.

With this ceremony, as before said, the Easter holidays, properly speaking, end. Everything, however, has a conclusion, then an end, and then a real and complete cessation. So there comes halting behind the Russian Easter yet another holiday, which may be said finally to close the doors of these festivals. It is the Monday after Easter, called by the Russians "Pominitelnyi Ponyedelnik" (Recollection Monday). When I heard this name for the first time, I asked a Russian the meaning of it, to which he replied, "Because people then remember their parents." This Monday is nearly our All-Souls' day, and is, no doubt, brought in connection with Easter, partly because it follows so immediately, and partly because the resurrection of Christ has a natural connection with the hoped-for resurrection of those dear

to us. To say the truth, Recollection Monday is a kind of monster of a holiday, for in the manner of its celebration religious gravity is so much shocked, and yet the feeling and fancy are flattered by so much that is kindly, that we know not well whether we should condemn it for its indecorum, or cherish it for its child-like simplicity.

In the morning the people flock to the cemeteries, and after attending service in the chapels belonging to them, in memory of and honour to their departed friends, take a meal over their graves!

At a very early hour the never-wearied holiday folks may be seen setting forth with bag and baggage on foot and in vehicles. The food is carried, in the first place, into the chapels, and laid upon the table in the middle. There is generally a large round loaf in the midst of a dish; and round about it the red-painted Easter eggs, salt, gingerbread, oranges, and lemons. In the midst of the loaf a lighted taper is always stuck, without which no Russian, any more than a Gheber, can observe a religious solemnity, the clear flickering flame being to him always a symbol of the spiritual.

A Flemish pencil might produce the strangest picture in the world by a faithful representation of this oddly-furnished banquet, particularly as the taste of the purveyors varies considerably. Every one has his loaf of a different form from the rest; one has added a dish of rice and plums, another a pot of honey, and a third some other dish, according to his means. On every loaf a little book is laid. In one I found written on one page, "This book belongs to Anna Timofeyvna," (Anna, Timothy's daughter), and on the next page, "This book is inscribed to the memory of my dear father, Fedor Pavlovitch, and my good mother, Elizabeth Petrovna." On a third page stood the names of Gregor Sergei and Maria. They call these books "Pominatelnoi Knig," or Books of Remembrance.

After the usual mass the priests approach the strangely-loaded tables and sing prayers for the dead, swinging the censers all the while. They turn over the leaves of the before-mentioned books, and introduce the names there found in the prayer. When this general prayer and consecration is over, the people disperse about the church-yard; each party seek the graves of their friends, particularly of those lately lost, and weep over them. The greater number mourn in silence; but some, whose sorrow is yet new, cast themselves in despair upon the earth, and give it vent aloud. On one such occasion I noticed particularly one old woman, whose voice of lamentation resounded over the whole burying-ground. I went up to her and asked for whom she mourned. She raised herself and answered, for a young married daughter. Then she threw herself down again with her face to the grass, and cried into the grave as if her child could hear: "Ah! my dearest daughter, why hast thou forsaken me? Ah, thou loveliest! thou

young one! why hast thou left thy old mother with her seventy years? Couldst thou not wait till she had gone before thee? Ah! my daughter, is it not against nature that the child should leave her mother untended? And thy little son, thy Fedor, he too is left. Alas! my daughter, son and mother are left alone!"

I cannot express how deeply the lamentation of this poor old woman affected me as she chanted her sorrow in a kind of church melody; now and then ceasing entirely, and burying her gray, care-worn head in the grass.

Thus she mourned till the priests came to the grave. They, in the mean time, paraded the church-yard with burning tapers and crucifixes, and performed a special service over every grave where it was desired, the "books of remembrance" being handed to them for the purpose. The priests were followed by troops of unfortunate persons, cripples and beggars, who expected to receive part of the food in alms. I saw several whose sacks had been so abundantly stored with eggs that they might have begun trade with them. Some of the mourners gave the whole of what they had brought, and made thus a worthy offering to the departed. My poor old woman was among the number. I helped her to divide some of the loaves: a task her trembling hands refused to perform. The majority, I am sorry to say, spread their napkins over the graves, arranged their food upon them, not forgetting the wine and brandy bottles, and set to work with as good an appetite as if the day had been preceded by seven years of Egyptian famine instead of a Russian Easter. These ghastly banqueting-tables, and the revelling groups around them, formed the strangest spectacle I ever saw in my life! The priests, of course, came in for a share, and tasted something at every grave. I approached one company, consisting of some official persons, among whom there was one decorated with a couple of orders. These people had covered a long grave with a large table-cloth, and had loaded it abundantly from a store in their carriage, which was drawn up close by, and out of which they were continually fetching fresh supplies. Two priests were among the revellers, and were challenged more frequently than any others of the party. Not before night were the dead left in peace in their last resting-place, and many, unfortunately very many, left it in a condition which may be said to have turned the day of remembrance into one of complete forgetfulness.

The great excesses committed at this season are particularly misplaced when the digestive system has been so much lowered in tone, and cause much sickness among the lower class of Russians; so that, for many, their holidays are attended by very evil consequences. The hospitals are never so full as after Easter; and according to the statement of a physician to me, statistical writers, in giving the bills of mortality for the several months, might safely quote the Easter holidays as in some measure accounting for the great number of deaths in April.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE GARDENS AND VILLAGES.

THE sixtieth degree of northern latitude crosses the suburbs of St. Petersburg. Since the creation of the world no other city has displayed so much splendour and luxury, so near the eternal ices of the pole, as this imperial residence; and the neighbourhood of the Baltic Sea is perhaps the only one where such an attempt in such a parallel could have succeeded.

The parallel under which St. Petersburg has built palaces and cultivated gardens is the same under which, in Siberia, the Ostiaks and Tungusians find a scanty nourishment of moss for their reindeer, and where the Kamtschatdale drives his dogs over never-melting ice.\* In the same circle where St. Petersburg enjoys every luxury of the civilised and uncivilised world, the Circenlander and Esquimaux, with their seal-fat and train oil, barely keep alive the feeble glimmer of vegetation rather than life. Swampy Livonia, which even the Poles call harsh and raw, the province whence come the wild and pitiless snow-storms called by the Prussians Courland weather, are to the St. Petersburgers very agreeable and tolerably warm southern provinces. In Poland the Russian begins to look about him for tropical vegetation; and of the nebulous Germania, whose frigora and gray skies inspire the shuddering Italian to strike the elegiac chords of his harp, the Petersburgers think as of a land "where the orange-trees bloom."

No city in Europe stands in such close relation to the beasts of the wilderness as St. Petersburg. Even at Stockholm a tolerable number of miles intervene between the city and the dens of the wolves; at St. Petersburg the lurking-places of these gaunt animals and the palaces of the princes are within a neighbourly distance. It is a remarkable proof of the wildness of the environs of St. Petersburg, that between breakfast and dinner a man may go on a wolf or bear hunt as he may on a hare-hunt from Berlin. In hard winters hungry wolves have approached the suburbs, and even the neighbourhood of the imperial palace, in search of food. The imperial couriers despatched between the Winter Palace and the neighbouring residences have, even of late years, fallen more than once a prey to these animals; and there are in St. Petersburg many ladies whose elegant Parisian toilet has been exposed to dangerous proximity with the shaggy lords of the forest. I was told by one lady that she had in a garden scared a wolf with her parasol; and by another how she had been surprised by a bear while reading on a bench in the

\* The greater part of the Tungusians live farther south. Okhotsk lies one degree, Tobolsk two, and the southern point of Kamtschatka nearly nine degrees farther south than St. Petersburg.

garden of her villa close to St. Petersburg, and how she had thrown a romance of George Sand at his head! The Russians maintain that the bear is a great coward, and will never attack unless wounded or otherwise irritated. They relate many odd effects of sudden fright upon him, which, however they may merit the attention of the naturalist, can scarcely be related here. A boy was once sent from a country-house to fetch bread; he came back without it, and said that he had met a bear on his way, and thrown the loaves at his head. On returning to the place indicated, the bread was found there, and the bear not far off—dead! The people maintain that he died of a fit caused by the fright. All this shows how much the Fauns of the forest have still the advantage of Ceres and Flora in the environs of St. Petersburg!

"For heaven's sake send me a picture of the sun!" said a friend to me as I was setting off for the south (*i.e.* Germany); "it seems to me years since I have seen the glorious divinity!" If, in the other parts of the European world, the German Apollo does not pass for the most attractive of gods, we may judge from the above remark what a St. Petersburg Phæbus must be like! To feel this rightly, one must have lived there; one must have exchanged the pale gray of the St. Petersburg sky for the south, to know how beautiful, how enchanting can appear that German heaven which the French and Italians have so much to say against. Our hearts beat, and a tear of poetical emotion moistens our eyes, when we sing of the land of the citron and the myrtle. Even thus is the tenderness of a St. Petersburg awakened for countries where cherry and plum-trees are to be met with in the highways. According to the St. Petersburg calendar there are only ninety days when sunshine is to be expected, and then the smile of heaven is not seldom mingled with a frown. Their firmament is no firm, lofty, azure vault, but a grayish tent-cloth constantly fluttering in the wind.

St. Petersburg is not, however, more defective in its roof than in its flooring. What in Vienna and Paris is a firm rocky footing, is in St. Petersburg a bottomless morass. The swampy nature of the soil oozes through the pavement and wood-work in spring and autumn; and although millions on millions are lavished yearly for paving the streets and mending the roads, bridges and canals for draining foundations and the like, yet the site of the city is so little solid and secure, that behind every garden-wall the soil is still a wild, marshy, uneven swamp as when the Titans of yore beheld it. In our towns, at least in the suburbs, every house stands in the midst of trees, vines, and shrubs, and bloom and perfume grace every neglected corner; but at St. Petersburg every garden stands in the midst of a morass; and where the spade has not been at work, the ugly bog still stares you in the face. With us (I mean at Vienna, Dresden, Hamburg, Frankfort: indeed, about almost all German

cities) Nature herself half forms a garden: there are hills, valleys, flowery meadows, a variety of trees, or at least a firm soil to tread on, and an endurable canopy of sky; and to make a garden, we have often nothing to do but to lay out the walk. At St. Petersburg there is not one of these things! The firm ground must be made by art; the gravel walks must be founded by the hand of the carpenter. If meadows are wanted, the turf must be laid down sod by sod; if hills, the earth must be thrown up; if a valley, it must be dug. Those who desire warmth must heat their stoves; those who wish for a sky must paint one in their drawing-rooms.

It is only between four walls we can enjoy calm weather or any of the beauties of nature in St. Petersburg: bright colours are to be seen only on walls. The pastures and meadows are dirty gray and yellow; no friendly green presents itself anywhere but on the roofs of the houses. The sky is misty and watery; the stars glitter from the blue cupolas of the churches, but none twinkle anywhere else. The paler the sun's face the more resplendent are the summits of the towers; the fainter the moonlight the brighter shine the gorgeous palaces. Heavens! what cost, what toil and trouble had Peter the Great spared the St. Petersburgers, past, present, and to come, had he followed up his first idea of building his new capital on the shores of the Black Sea! So many foreign ambassadors would not then wonder at the rapidity with which they grow old, and there would be prettier girls. St. Petersburg would have acacias, laurels, and pomegranates, instead of birches, firs, and cranberries; and so many millions would not pass half their lives in considering how they and their families are to be kept warm.

The only thing that was of use to the St. Petersburgers, when they set about the establishment and planting of their environs, was the beautiful, clear, deep Neva, with its many branches, to which may be added the group of hills called the Duderhoff Mountains and the coast of the Gulf of Finland. All those who seek the rural landscape have taken refuge either in the islands, on those hills, or along that coast.

#### THE ISLANDS.

In the whole delta of the Neva there are more than forty islands, great and small. Some of these islands, although all belong to the precincts of the city, are still perfectly desert, inundated by the sea and the Neva, visited only by seals or by wolves, which come over the ice.

Such are the Volny Islands, the Trukhtanoff Islands, and some others. They are swampy and overgrown with birch, and scarcely known by name in St. Petersburg; others contain magazines for powder and other stores. The largest are the often-named Vassili Ostrof, the St. Petersburg Island, and the islands formed by

the Moika, Fontanka, and the other canals. These are almost entirely occupied by the houses of the city, and form the centre of this island-metropolis. North-west of the St. Petersburg Island lie five others of moderate size, separated by the arms of the greater and lesser Nevka, and the Neva; these are the islands, emphatically so called, the "Garden Islands" of St. Petersburg: Krestovsky (the Cross Island), Kammenoi Ostrof (the Stone Island), Petrofskoi Ostrof (Peter's Island), Yelaginskoi Ostrof (Yelagin Island), and the Apothecary Island.\* Originally these islands yielded nothing but shrubs, some few old oaks, the senior veterans of St. Petersburg, and particularly birches and firs, with which the greater part of the islands are still covered. These primeval woods and primeval swamps were invaded by the art of gardening towards the close of the last century. Man cleared them in some measure, made gravel walks, planted new trees, such as could be made to grow under the sixtieth parallel of latitude, left standing the old oaks under which the Ingrians had sacrificed, and also here and there a little Finnish fishing village, which, in the midst of increasing luxury, displayed, in the most piquant manner, the contrast of times, and the extremes of social life. Bridges were thrown from island to island, canals made, and, above all, imperial pleasure palaces and pretty villas (*datshas*), were built on the banks of the river.

The greater part of these gardens have been planted under Alexander and Nicholas, to whom almost every Russian town is indebted for its public garden. They were begun under Catherine, and hence, perhaps, the name *datsha* (gift) for villa; for she made many grants of ground, and even of whole islands, to her favourites, that they might build and lay out villas and houses there. The Yelagin Island was first given to a Melgunoff, then to a Yelagin: it now belongs to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna. Each of the islands has its particular destination, and is devoted to a particular class. Yelagin belongs almost exclusively to the court. It is entirely occupied by the imperial chateau and gardens. The court generally resides there in spring, which is the most brilliant time for the islands. On this island there are no private houses, and no other amusement for the public than walking. There is nothing very remarkable in the chateau of Yelagin: it is not to be compared with the gardens and chateau at Potsdam. \*Kammenoi Ostrof is the chief island for the villas of the wealthier classes. The houses are built on the banks of the river, all in different styles: one is Gothic, another Italian, a third Chinese, &c. In this small space, specimens are to be found of the taste of all ages and nations in gardening and villa building. Although they have generally cost enormous sums in the erection, and display much luxury, we should look in vain

\* When they say in St. Petersburg "We will go to the islands this summer," "We will make a party to the islands," they mean these five Garden Islands, and no others out of the whole forty.

for the architectural grandeur of the Italian villas, the comfort of English country-houses, or the simple enjoyment of a German garden. For one charm these datschas are indebted to the severity of the climate, namely: for the great abundance of flowers. The hot-houses are profusely supplied; and in the warm weather, the balconies, doors, and windows of the datschas are adorned with multitudes of exotic plants, as the peasants' houses in many parts of Germany are with May-flowers at Whitsuntide.

Krestovsky, or the Cross Island, lies before the courtly Yelagin and Kaumanoi Ostroi, towards the sea, and is larger than the two former put together. Numerous avenues have been opened through the thick primeval birch and pine woods of this island, and afford agreeable views of the Gulf of Finland. This island is peculiarly the resort of the lower classes of St. Petersburg. Hither flock the *mushik* and the *kupez* in gay gondolas, to enjoy in the woods their national amusements of swings and Russian mountains; and here, on holidays, smoke on the grass under every pine-group the favourite *samovar*, round which may be seen encamped a party of long-beards, gossiping, singing, and clamouring.

The German part of the population have appropriated to themselves another island. It is on Petroffsky that the German prefers to take his cup of coffee, and indulge himself with his pipe. The arrangements here are on a smaller scale; and here only are to be found milk and cake gardens, coffee-houses and taverns, as in the neighbourhood of our towns. It must not be understood, however, that there is anything exclusive here, and datschas, cha-teaux, and Russians, mingle here as elsewhere.

As a thorough St. Petersburgher, firmly of opinion that no city in the world is to be compared with his own, cherishes a prejudice against all that is not St. Petersburgish, so does he most particularly prize these magic islands, and is not a little astonished when a foreigner, to whom he displays their splendour, is not equally enchanted. The St. Petersburgers can by no means understand how any one should hesitate to place the Island Gardens by the side of those of Babylon, Damascus, or Shiraz, or to count St. Petersburg as a fifth Paradise. Passing their whole lives in a continued tumult, in droshkies or coaches-and-four; having never sat buried in thought, or absorbed by a book in the still fragrance of a honeysuckle arbour; having, in short, no such pleasant corners themselves, they cannot at all understand what a German finds wanting in their gardens when he says, "Yes, it is very fine, but not half so pleasant as in our country." Nature herself with us supplies what art leaves wanting to the decoration of the garden, and every humble citizen and peasant helps to make the picture more complete and luxuriant. In St. Petersburg, what the government and the rich leave undone, remains incomplete. No generally-diffused spirit of gardening is at hand, and the wind whistles shrilly through every opening.



Nevertheless, and in spite of us sighing foreigners, the islands have their favourable side; the question is only, to choose well the time and occasion to view them. Before all things, let no one think of going on foot, as if he were going to the Thiergarten of Berlin, or the Prater of Vienna. It should be remembered, that in St. Petersburg droshkies are always reckoned upon, that all the gardens and buildings are scattered over an extensive surface, and that these tableaux on a large scale are best seen the faster you drive by them. Take then, if possible, a carriage with four horses; dash through the desolate quarter of St. Petersburg Ostrof with the speed of the wind, and pass the train of brilliant equipages that throng the avenues of Yelagin and Krestovsky on holidays and Sundays at the same rate; call upon a friend, if you have one, in any of these elegant swamp-villas, and enjoy the tea or evening collation upon his luxurious divans, and in the midst of all the costly decoration of his reception-rooms. Then towards sunset have a gondola, manned by half-a-dozen sturdy fellows, and row down the arm of the Neva to the Gulf of Finland. Watch there the globe of the northern summer sun sink into the lap of Thetis, and hurry back through the magic July night, and row round some of the islands, taking a wide sweep, for there is plenty of room here on the water also, punching and driving your gondoliers, mean while, to make them go the faster. Listen then from the water to the sounds from the thick forest, gaze on the lights from the fishing villages, the late illumination of the brilliant datshas, and hearken to the nightly doings on the islands, where all is as loud by night as it was by day; and at last return home like a night-wandering ghost, when, towards one o'clock, the cold dew announces the return of the sun.

In the way home admire on the Prospekt the palaces gleaming bright in the nightly reflex of the sun; and when, on the following morning, in drawing your bed curtains at eleven, you recall the singular dream of the past night, you will understand why the islands are so highly esteemed.

A St. Petersburg friend may take you to breakfast at Talon's, or to a promenade on the English quay; but if he be prudent he will content himself with that, and not propose a walk to the St. Petersburg villages. The villages that surround our capitals are the prettiest that can be conceived; the Hamburg villages on the Elbe, those on the Maine by Frankfort, even the turnip-planted hamlets of our sandy Jerusalem, are charming, full of rural beauty, and abounding in subjects for the sketch-book of the artist. The "villages" so much talked of in St. Petersburg are five in number: Great and Little Okhta, Bolshaya Derevnaya, Malaya Derevnaya, and Tshornaya Retshka. They lie in long, endless (everything in St. Petersburg is without end) lines on the Neva, the two first-named opposite the upper, and the two latter opposite the lower part of the city. The houses of these villages are of fir-tree logs roughly put together, and planted in

regular rows like a regiment of soldiers. From the houses, hardly one of which has the ornament even of a tree, the long cabbage and cucumber plantations stretch into the country on the land side; and a road along the banks of the river is lined on holidays with carriages, driving up and down, as they do in the avenues on the Garden Islands.

Those persons whose revenues are too moderate for a Gothic or Chinese datscha, engage a summer residence in some of these deal houses, and enjoy there as much rural happiness as tea-drinking, card-playing, and hard driving can afford them. One cannot but admire the modesty of their demands in this respect.

At Novaya Derevnja is the new establishment of Strive for mineral waters: a magnificent house, with elegant saloons, and promenades under cover. It stands in the midst of a bare swamp, nearly four (English) miles from the centre of the town. In summer this is a favourite resort of the fashionable world of the islands. An unprejudiced person finds it difficult to comprehend why so useful an establishment was formed in such a place. Those who drive out and back again every day to enjoy this mock Carlsbad, might have gone to the real one for the same expense of time and money.

The gardens of Stroganoff and Beshorodko (the former is open to the public) have also made considerable inroads into the territories of the divinities of swamp and mud. Altogether, the possessions of St. Petersburg in garden land may be reckoned at twenty-five millions of square yards.

The villages of Great and Little Okhta are remarkable as the site of St. Petersburg's predecessor: the old Swedish fortress of Nyenschanz, at a still earlier period called Landskrona, or, in Russian, Venetz Semli (the Crown of the Land). For the possession of this little fortress and trading town, the Swedes and Russians (not the Muscovites, but the republicans of Novgorod) disputed as early as the thirteenth century. It was generally held by Sweden, and through its mediation a peaceful commercial intercourse was sometimes kept up between the two countries. The last traces of this fortress have now vanished, and are forgotten.\*

#### THE SEA-COAST.

Peter the Great—every chapter that treats of Russia must begin with Peter the Great; for not only St. Petersburg, but every twig and branch of Russian public or social life, the history of cities, roads, canals, public institutions, the annals of gardens, buildings, manufactories, mines, and mills, all begin with Peter

\* In the old papers of a merchant of Rerval, I read German commercial letters dated from Nyenschanz on the Neva; and I saw in St. Petersburg an old oaken clothes-press that came from Nyenschanz—the only antiquities, perhaps, that St. Petersburg possesses.

the Great;—Peter the Great, then, did what no ruler ever did before him: he built his capital on hostile ground. Perhaps he thought like the officer who, to animate his soldiers to the charge, threw his own standard into the midst of the enemy. Let our dearest treasure be in the hands of an enemy, and we shall fight the more zealously to make it ours again. Often, while the building of the city was going on, he had to exchange the chisel and mallet for the sword, and drive back the enemy from the very gates of his infant capital. On one of these suburb battle-fields he built, in the year 1711, without the city and close to the sea, the castle and garden of Catherinenhoff, as a memorial of a victory obtained over the Swedes. At first it was only the summer residence of his consort Catherine, and of the grand-duchesses Agnes and Elizabeth. Their wooden palace stands yet, but the gardens are greatly extended. For a long time these and the "Summer Garden" were the only pleasure resorts of the kind for the citizens; and still, probably from habit, these gardens are visited on the first of May. On that day all St. Petersburg is in motion; the poor on foot, the young exquisites on horseback, the ladies in their carriages, all flock to Catherinenhoff to hail the coming of the fine season, even though it be held expedient, as it generally is, to go well wrapped up in bearskins.

The gardens are full of bowling-greens and restaurants, and while smoking a cigar before one of these restaurants we may enjoy the pleasure of seeing half the magnificences of the empire move slowly past in their carriages-and-four; the senators, the star-covered generals, the reverend bishops and metropolitans, the bearded merchants and the "foreign guests:" a spectacle of which, often as it is repeated, a St. Petersburgher is never weary. The carriages move after a certain prescribed plan the whole day long, like horses in a mill. It is enough to make one giddy to think that all the gay world throughout Russia are moving about their many thousand towns at the same pace on the same day. The emperor, whose presence crowns the festival, is generally on horseback, with the princes and a brilliant staff. The St. Petersburghers, who are accustomed to keep all holidays in common with their adored emperor and his court, cannot at all relish ours, where this luminary is wanting, in whose magnificent presence all appears so much brighter, and to admire whom is the habit of their lives. The arrival of the emperor is looked for as if he were the representative of the spring, and when he has passed by, the throng drop off, one after the other, and go home again, as if the sun himself had disappeared.

From Catherinenhoff a series of country-houses stretch along the coast of the gulf to Peterhof and Oranienbaum. In the neighbourhood of the city the coast is low and flat: a part of the inundated delta of the Neva; farther on towards the southern shores of the gulf, the coast rises into chalky cliffs, and forms an abrupt height of from two to three hundred feet. This part of

the coast is called the Klint. West of this Klint lies the cathedral of Reval; farther to the east the cascade of the Narova falls from the Klint at nine English miles from the sea; there is probably nowhere else in Europe so considerable a waterfall so near the sea; Peterhof and Oranienbaum lie on the side of the Klint, and a number of garden terraces belonging to private villas descend from it to the sea.

The road to Zarskoye Selo excepted, the Peterhof coast-road is decidedly the liveliest and best inhabited of any in the precincts of St. Petersburg. It is broad, finely paved, with excellent bridges, and granite verst stones. It is a proof of the general monotony that reigns in all things here, that the verst stones are the only landmarks in this desert. People will say, for instance, "We are living this year in the Peterhof road, at the seventh verst;" or "The Orlof Datscha stands at the eleventh verst;" "We will breakfast at the traiteur's at the fourteenth verst;" as if these milestones were pyramids. But so it is: there are neither valleys, brooks, nor smiling villages wherewith to distinguish places; and people can find their way only by reckoning the milestones.

The centre of Peterhof is the old castle, built by Peter the Great. Although every emperor and empress has made additions and alterations, the character of the whole is the same as that of all the houses built by Peter the Great: the old Summer Palace, the Menzikoff Palace, &c.; even the yellow colour of the castle is always renewed. Like all the other buildings, its architecture is very insignificant in character, and deserves as little to be mentioned with Versailles and the other French chateaux which may have served as models, as the Kasan Church deserves to be compared with St. Peter's at Rome. Animating as the view is from the lofty coast over the sea, covered with ships of war and merchantmen, it is strange enough that the main front of the castle should be turned landwards. Downwards to the sea-shore, the garden descends in terraces, adorned with fountains and waterfalls. The basins, the Neptunes, storks, swans, and nymphs; the tritons, dolphins, painted rocks and grottoes, are copied from the engravings in Hushfeld's "Art of Gardening;" but we cannot pass the oaks and lime-trees planted by Peter himself without reverence. The smaller buildings of Marly and Montplaisir, which lie under these trees, as wings to the larger edifice, remind the beholder, as many a house in the city has done, of the modest domestic arrangements of the carpenter of Saardam, the great reformer of eastern Europe.

The castle has one highly-interesting apartment, containing a collection of three hundred and sixty-eight pictures. They are all portraits, executed by a certain Count Rotali in the time of Catherine the Second, in the course of a journey through the fifty governments of Russia, probably to afford the empress an idea of the wealth of her great empire in physiognomies and

beauty. They are all beautiful young girls, whom the count has painted in picturesque situations, and in their national costume. One cannot but admire the inventive genius of the count in giving a different position and different expression to all these three hundred and sixty-eight faces. One pretty girl is knitting diligently, another embroidering; one peeps archly from behind a curtain, another gazes expectingly from a window; another leans over a chair, as if listening to a lover; a third, reclining on cushions, seems lost in thought. One slumbers so softly and so sweetly that a man must be a Laplander in apathy not to wish for a kiss; this stands before a glass, combing her beautiful hair; that has buried herself up to the ears in fur, leaving visible only a pair of tender rosy lips, and soft blue eyes gleaming from under the wild bear's skin. There are also some excellent portraits of old people—two in particular—an old man with a staff, and an old woman by the fire. This collection is unique in its kind, and would be invaluable for the physiognomist, if he could be certain that these portraits were as exact and faithful as they are pleasing and tasteful. But this is doubtful, for they all bear, undeniably, rather the stamp of the French school than of the Russian, Tartar, Finnish, or any other nationality within the Russian empire. It is also a suspicious circumstance that they were done by a gentleman for a lady. Probably behind every graceful attitude some flattering homage to the empress lies concealed. The other apartments do not contain anything very remarkable. In one are the little table and benches with which the Emperors Alexander and Nicholas played as children; in another, some carving and Turner's work of Peter the Great. In one room we were shown the blots of ink made by this emperor or that, while engaged in his boyish studies; and in another we saw on the ceiling an extraordinary picture, representing a whole corps of angels playing from notes! every one with his music lying on a cloud by way of desk! while a fifth room contained all the gods of Greece, also reclining on clouds. The old Russian who acted as our guide remarked, evidently with no small pride at his superior enlightenment, that the old Greeks were very stupid and superstitious, to believe that the gods lay about on clouds in this way, as it was very well known *now* that the thing was an impossibility.

To be seen to advantage, Peterhof should be visited early in July, when the court gives the brilliant and renowned fêtes, to which, once for all, the whole five hundred thousand inhabitants of St. Petersburg are invited. All the rest of the year it looks as if no one were at home; but during those three days all is life and splendour, revelry and display. The sums paid for lodging are incredible. There are some people whom it costs twenty thousand rubles daily for lodging alone. This sounds extravagant, but it is literally true. The expense is incurred thus—for a person of rank it would not do to lodge with any of

the village proprietors; he must have a house of his own. A piece of ground is purchased, therefore, for twenty thousand or thirty thousand rubles; a *datsha* erected at a nominal charge of eighty thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand; but in the end, when the house is finished, it comes nearer to two hundred thousand or three hundred thousand. The interest of this money, at six per cent. would be from fifteen thousand to eighteen thousand rubles. The maintenance and wages for the overseers, stewards, and others, are enormous; they may amount yearly to about forty thousand rubles. When we further calculate that the whole wooden palace cannot last more than forty or fifty years, or will be sold again in much fewer for a mere nothing, and that it is only inhabited for three days in the year, it will be admitted that the calculation is not an extravagant one. The Russian nobles do not reckon thus, but they would be frightened if any one, with the help of the four rules, were to demonstrate to them how dearly this three days' amusement costs them.

## THE DUDERHOF HILLS.

The chief summer residence of the Russian emperor among the Duderhof Hills (Duddergovski Gori) is Zarskoye Selo. Like the majority of all that is beautiful or useful in Russia, it owes its origin to Peter the Great. He built the first house here, and planted (eternal praise and honour to the illustrious gardener that he did so!) the avenues of plane-trees with his own hand. But it was Elizabeth who built the large and magnificent castle, which was further embellished by Catherine; and after the great fire, the destiny of every Russian palace, and of every Russian town, it was restored by Alexander. The interior offers treasures and splendour enough to procure a *Scheherazayde* another truce of a thousand nights, to describe chambers of amber and mother-of-pearl; columns of jasper, agate, and porphyry; Chinese, Persian, and Turkish halls; colonnades, marble baths, mosaic pavements, malachite vases, kiosks, even whole Chinese villages, Dutch and Swiss cow-houses, triumphal arches, rostral pillars, and bronze statues, which Catherine erected to her favourites, and Alexander to his "dear companions in arms," intermingled with fields of roses, hermitages, artificial ruins, Roman tombs, grottoes, and waterfalls.

The gardens of Zarskoye Selo are certainly the most carefully kept in the world; the trees and flowers are watched and inspected with the most anxious minuteness. An old invalid soldier commands his five hundred or six hundred men as gardeners and overseers. After every falling leaf runs a veteran to pick it up; and after a violent north wind they have enough to do, as may well be imagined. Every tiny leaf that falls in pond or canal is carefully fished out; they dust and trim and polish the trees and paths in the gardens, as they do the looking-glasses and furniture of the saloons; every stone that is kicked aside is laid

straight again, and every blade of grass kept in a proper position. I once saw here an inquiry instituted about a broken flower, and carried on with as much solemnity as if it had been a capital offence. All the gardeners were called together, the inspector held the flower in his hand, and every possible question was put, as to in whose division, and out of what bed, the flower might be; whether plucked by a child or broken by a dog; and all this investigation proceeded with the profoundest seriousness, and the closest contemplation of the *corpus delicti*; threats were lavished, rewards for the discovery of the offender were promised, &c. The cost of all this polishing and furbishing alone is above one hundred thousand rubles yearly, but then the sacrifice keeps the gardens in the order of a ball-room. They say that the Russian nation requires a despotic, all-meddling government; a Russian garden certainly requires sharp discipline and a rigid police, to prevent all art and arrangement from flying away in storm and tempest. The gardens of Pavlovski are less magnificent but more attractive than those of Zarskoye Selo. They lie but a few versts from the latter, and also among the Duderhof Hills. The castle of Pavlovsk, the summer residence of the deceased empress-mother Maria, is more simple. According to Swinin, the walks in these gardens have a length of one hundred and fifty versts; and there is so much variety in the disposition of them, and in the shrubs and grouping of the trees, that Russian literature may boast of several books written on this subject alone.

Of late Pavlovsk and Zarskoye Selo are much more frequented, in consequence of the railroad that connects them with the city, and they have now become the favourite resort for citizens of the middle classes, who flock hither in such numbers in summer to dine, drink champagne and punch, and so forth (not to sip a cup of coffee and carry off a remainder of sugar, as with us), that they alone would keep the line in full activity. The town of Pavlovsk consists almost entirely of small wooden houses, which are hired in the summer as country residences. The German colonists in the environs do their best to increase these pleasures by providing fresh milk, good bread, clean rooms, and other things which are generally looked for in vain in the Finnish and Russian villages.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CRONSTADT.

ESTHONIA and Finland combine to form the Gulf of Finland, one of the three huge arms that the Baltic stretches into the northern lands. The entrance to the gulf lies between Reval and Abo. In the middle it expands into a wide lake, then, narrowing more and more, ends in the small bay of Cronstadt, which is, in fact, only the expanded mouth of the Neva, or rather the basin through which the waters of the delta reach the open sea. The

bay is shallow, its average depth scarcely reaching twelve feet, and affording a sharply-defined and narrow channel for vessels that do not draw more than eight or nine feet water. There, where the sea properly begins, marking the limits of the bay, and enclosing it almost to a lake, the coast of the Kettle Island rises above the level of the sea. This island exchanged its former Finnish name of Retusari, or Rat Island, for its present, when the armed delegates of Peter the Great, in the year 1703, drove off the Swedes. The latter, in retreating, left nothing behind them but a great camp-kettle, which the Russian conquerors reared in triumph on a pole as a trophy of victory, and immediately baptised the island after it.

Peter soon became aware that Kotlinoi Ostrof must be the key and outwork for the defence of his new capital, and he began himself to fortify it. The mouths of the Neva are many, and a multitude of ramparts were necessary to put all in a state of defence. The islands at these mouths are extraordinarily low and swampy, and decline so gradually into the sea that the erection of fortifications would have cost enormous sums. The Kettle Island lies in the midst of the water directly before the bay of Cronstadt, nearly semi-distant from the northern Carelian as from the southern Ingrian coast. Thus there remain but two arms of the sea to guard against the entrance of a hostile fleet. The navigation of the northern is by nature difficult, on account of the sandbanks: the sinking of vessels filled with stones made it altogether inaccessible. The southern arm, although nearly seven versts broad, has an exceedingly narrow channel close to the island. This arm had therefore to be invested with defences as with a coat of mail. For this purpose the coasts of the island, and that of Ingria, if not particularly good, were at least much more so than the low flat margins of the Neva islands, and a number of rocks and islets offered themselves as natural bases for forts and citadels. Peter the Great built the fort of Kronshlott on the southern side, and began one on the island itself. Succeeding governments completed these; and Paul I. in providing the rock of Riesbank with fortifications, under whose cannon any vessel must pass to enter the bay, seems to have perfected the defences of Cronstadt.

Cronstadt may be considered as the water-gate of St. Petersburg. Here is the chief station of the Baltic fleet, here the chief custom-house, and here all ships coming from the sea anchor. The smaller vessels run up to the mouths of the Neva; the larger stop here to discharge a part of their cargo before going farther, or they discharge it altogether into the magazines of Cronstadt that belong to the St. Petersburg merchants.

A multitude of small vessels and steam-boats, which start at regular hours, maintain a communication with the capital. When a favourable wind brings up at once whole fleets of a hundred or more large vessels from the sea, or when the Russian



war-fleet is preparing for a cruise, there are as many steam-boats and sailing-boats, cutters, schooners, brigs, gondolas, and boats, fetching and carrying intelligence, merchandise, and passengers, as there are droshkies, britshkas, and caleches on the Prospekt.

The bay of Cronstadt is as lifeless a desert in winter, that is, nearly six entire months, as it is animated in summer. The whole surface is frozen in winter to one solid level, broken only by three roads: one from St. Petersburg, one from Oranienbaum, and one from Sestrasbeck. These roads are indicated by signal posts; and on that to St. Petersburg, which is above thirty versts long, is a station built for rest and refreshment. In former times these ice-fields were often animated enough. Russian history tells of many battles fought on the crystal floor of the bay, over the heads of the fishes and seals.

The Kettle Island has a length of seven and a breadth of from two to three versts. Towards the north-west it ends in a promontory called Tolbukina-Kossa, on which a lighthouse is erected. Its greatest breadth is to the south-east; and here Cronstadt, with its harbour and fortifications, is situated. Nearly the whole surface of the island, where it has not been improved by art, is bare and desolate, either sandy or swampy, and scattered over with blocks of granite like the opposite coast of Carolia. Formerly it contained no dwellings but a few Finnish fishing-huts; now it bears a city containing sometimes thirty thousand inhabitants; and from its havens, whence only a few poor fishermen issued two hundred years ago, two-thirds of the foreign trade of Russia are now directed.\* If Nature had but favoured this island with a few more fathoms' elevation, and broken its sides into some deep creeks, it would have spared the Russian government an enormous outlay of money and labour. The harbours, docks, and bastions of Cronstadt, have cost within the last century millions and millions of rubles, and thousands of human lives. Had Neptune but touched the island with his earth-shaking trident, or Vulcan driven his fires through its clefts, the greater part of this human toil would have been unnecessary.

The harbour for vessels of war will contain about thirty-five large ships. A strong mole, four hundred and fifty fathoms long, protects it from the violence of the waves. Near this lies "the middle haven," destined for the fitting out of ships of war. In the dock-yards of St. Petersburg only the hulls of vessels are built; they are then with infinite labour transported on "camels"†

\* In general, Cronstadt with the garrison has not more than ten thousand inhabitants; but during the summer, when trade is most active, it has more than thirty thousand workmen, sailors, soldiers, merchants; Russian, German, and English.

† These "camels" are gigantic chests, big enough to hold a ship of the line. When the hull is built, and is ready to be sent down the Neva, such a chest is brought into the Admiralty dock-yard and filled with water till it sinks so deeply as to admit the vessel to float in through an aperture in the side. This done, the water is pumped out again, when the "camel" begins to rise, till at last it is enabled to float down the river with its singular passenger. It is then towed by a steam-vessel to Cronstadt,

over the shallow bay of Cronstadt to this "middle haven" to be finished and fully equipped. The haven is surrounded by powder magazines, and by immense quantities of anchors, cordage, tar, and other naval stores from the arsenal of Sestrasbeek.

Farther to the west lies the merchants' harbour, capable of receiving a thousand vessels, and therefore the most interesting and animated of the three. To the north-west it is protected by a bastion of granite blocks. A promenade on this bastion is the most agreeable in Cronstadt. Hence may be obtained the best view of the life and bustle in the three harbours. Opposite are the improving fortifications of Kronshlott, and from the extremity, the prospect of the wide sea, with the vessels ever appearing and disappearing on the horizon.

The waters of the bay are fresh, except when a storm blows from the west, and makes them slightly salt. This freshness of the water is said to be the cause of the rapid decay of the ships, but the shocks they receive from the ice may have more to do with this than the want of salt. From the middle and the merchants' harbour two great canals run into the interior of the city. The quays on these canals, as well as those of the harbours, are of granite, and in a style of magnificence such as is hardly to be seen in any other commercial city.\*

The canal running from the middle harbour, which was begun by Peter the Great and finished by Elizabeth, brings up the ships of war to the dock for repair. It can admit ten large vessels at once. The whole basin, which is formed of granite, can by means of a steam-engine be laid dry in two days, and filled again within six hours.

The fortifications, harbours, canals, and dock, are the proper objects of admiration in Cronstadt. Except these, all is of an ordinary character; neither the churches nor the houses have anything remarkable in them: the latter are for the most part but one story high. Besides the Russian-Greek churches, there are an English, a German Lutheran, and a Catholic church. A Noble club, a Gostinnoi Dvor, barracks, hospitals, cadet schools, &c. The town is divided into two parts: the division of the Commandant and that of the Admiralty; in the latter there is a summer garden which boasts of some flowers said to have been planted by Peter the Great.†

Cronstadt is the chief station of the Russian fleet. The fleet (like all Russia, the creation of Peter) originated on the little river Yaurra, near Moscow, where Peter, with his Dutch friend Brand, used to sail up and down in an English sloop which had

and generally without accident, if wind and weather are favourable. Why so inconvenient a dock-yard has not long ago been abandoned, it is difficult to conceive.

\* They were erected by the Emperor Nicholas, who has done more for Cronstadt than any former sovereign.

† In at least eight Russian towns they show some such sacred flowers, said to have been planted by Peter with his own hands.

been discovered near Ismailof, and which the Dutchman had repaired and equipped. The water in the Yausa is not always high, and in summer the river is almost dry. Peter caused the sloop to be carried to the little lake of Pereyaslavl, and there he cruised daily with Brand about the creeks of the lake, learned to set the sails, to steer, and to avail himself of opposing winds. The thing pleased the czar so much that Brand was obliged to build two more small yachts. Brand was the admiral of the fleet, the emperor pilot, and the crews amounted to about a dozen seamen. At that time there were no other Russian sailors, and for cannon they had two small guns, scarcely large enough to be heard on the other side of the wood that surrounded the lake. But the play in time became earnest. In 1694 Peter had decided on his plan: he would have a Russian fleet, and Le Fort was named admiral of the fleet that was yet to be created.

From the small lake of Pereyaslavl the fleet passed to the great lake of Peipus; there enemies were found, and engagements took place between the Swedes and Russians. In 1702, the flag taken from a Swedish vessel on the lake of Ladoga, the first trophy of the infant marine of Russia, was carried in triumph into Moscow, and lodged in the Kremlin.

From the lake of Peipus, whose circling coasts had all become Russian, and from the lake of Ladoga the fleet appeared upon the Baltic; the marine plant, thus carefully nurtured in the interior of the empire, and transported from lake to lake, developed itself with extraordinary rapidity, and spread over the whole surface of that sea. After the first prize had been taken from Sweden, the Russian fleet was kept in action almost exclusively by that power. The disputes of the Swedes and Russians in the Gulf of Finland, where both considered themselves legitimate masters, are as old as the existence of the two people. Early powerful on the sea, and at different periods of their history masters of the Baltic, the Swedes remained masters also of the coasts for centuries. On Peter's appearance on the sea, the leaf was turned, and a series of naval battles have at last secured the Baltic provinces to Russia, and by degrees driven the Swedes from every bay and corner of the Gulf of Finland. The first important fight took place in 1715, after the annihilation of the Swedish army at Pultowa. From 1703, Peter had sent one vessel after another to sea, gun-boats, galleys, frigates, and even ships of the line of sixty guns and more. By a bold manœuvre, conducted by the czar himself, he passed his small galleys and cutters over the isthmuses of Angut and Ratzaburg, which separated him from the Swedish fleet; attacked it unexpectedly, captured the admiral himself, Von Ehrenschild, and his ship, forced twelve large vessels to strike, and sailed to the island of Åland, spreading terror to the very heart of the Swedish capital. The battle of Angut made the Russian fleet of age in less than twenty years after its birth, and Peter sailed back in triumph to his new

capital to be promoted to the rank of vice-admiral, and to address the following speech to the surrounding nobles:—

“My brethren, who among you would have held it possible, thirty years ago, that you should navigate the Baltic with a Russian fleet, and that from Russian families such naval heroes and navigators should spring as we now see before us? Could we then hope that so many able men, distinguished in science, would have hastened from all parts of Europe to assist the advance of our country in science? Did we divine that we should inspire foreign nations with so much respect, that such abundance of renown so soon awaited us? We learn from history that Greece was once the asylum of Science and Art, and that driven thence, they wandered to other parts of Europe. The negligence and indifference of our forefathers alone are to blame that the Muses did not traverse Poland to reach us. The Poles and Germans once groped in the same darkness of ignorance in which we so recently pined. By the care of their rulers their eyes were opened, and they received a portion of the inheritance of Greece: her civilization and her arts. The wanderings of human civilization may be compared to the circulation of the blood. I hope that the Muses, when they have forsaken Germany, France, and England, may still dwell with us. Look on this new city rising fresh and blooming on the soil conquered by our arms; on the cupolas of these churches, that have arisen under your own eyes; on these schools and academics; behold the thronging masts and sails of our victorious fleet, and you will acknowledge that it is now our turn. Support me in my undertakings, unite the strictest obedience to the most energetic industry, and we shall soon behold our Russia taking the rank that is her due among the civilized powers in Europe.”

After the victory that gave occasion to this speech, the fleet remained inactive under the reign of Peter the Great, and under Catherine the First it retreated timidly into the harbours of Reval and Cronstadt, when blockaded by the English, irritated by Russia's alliance with Spain and Austria. This is the only time that the English and Russian fleets have been opposed to each other, and they did not come to battle then, as a peace was soon afterwards concluded. In the Seven Years' War, the Russian fleet afforded active and able support to their army which had advanced on Prussia, by blockading the ports, cutting off all assistance by sea, and assisting the land forces to land on different parts of the coast. Under Peter the Third, troops were to have been landed in Holstein, which this prince designed to conquer, but his sudden death prevented the sailing of the ships. A new impulse was given by Catherine the Second to naval improvement; the fleet in the Black Sea was formed, Europe was circumnavigated, and Russian ships were seen for the first time in the Levant, to protect Russian interests there. The ships which sailed from Cronstadt, and were exposed to the criticism and

ridicule of England in 1769, were heavily built, and manned by inexperienced sailors; nevertheless they accomplished the voyage round Europe, after encountering many dangers and adventures, the result of want of skill; and ill as they may have appeared in comparison with English vessels, they had, no doubt, a considerable advantage over the Turks, for in the following year the battle in the Bay of Tshesme took place, which obtained for the Orloffs the family name of Tshesmenski, and a triumphal arch in Zarskoye Selo; for the soldiers and sailors who fought there, a medal with the words "Buil" (I was there); and for Russia the command of the Black Sea, and the free navigation of the Dardanelles.

After Catherine had acquired the Crimea, Azov, and the mouths of the Dnieper, a great deal of pine timber was brought from Volhynia. Dutch and English admirals, German and Greek seamen, were engaged; still the Russian fleet was so little available, that the English, to whose assistance against the French Catherine had sent her ships, begged her to take them back again, as affording more embarrassment than help. However useless the English found them on that occasion, the Russian ships did good service towards the end of the last century; in 1809, before the peace of Fredericksham, and also at the battle of Navarino, and in the years 1828 and 1829. The Swedes were eventually driven out of the Gulf of Finland, and the Turks from the Black Sea.

No sovereign since Peter the Great has done so much for the Russian navy as Nicholas. At Navarino the English were no longer so discontented with Russian ships, if we may believe that the testimony of Captain Crawford was not a mere matter of courtesy, in acknowledgment of the hospitable reception given him by the Russian fleet, or that he was not influenced by party feeling to throw the blame of negligence upon the then English ministry. "I cannot refrain from expressing my astonishment," said Captain Crawford, "at the extraordinary advance made by the Russian navy at a time when that of England has been at least stationary. It was truly admirable to see the attention paid by the Russian officers to all that passed on board our ships, and the promptitude with which they applied their newly-acquired knowledge. There are among the Russian naval officers and sailors an admirable *esprit de corps*, an emulation, a desire to do their best, an enthusiasm for their national fleet and its prosperity. I could not, as an English naval officer, help feeling somewhat strange at the thought that there should be at Cronstadt twenty-six Russian ships of the line, with thirty thousand men on board and victualled for four months, while, for the protection of our coasts and harbours, our merchantmen in the Baltic, the North Sea, and the Channel, there were only seven ships of the line, and even those not fully manned."

The whole naval force of Russia consists of three hundred and

fifty ships of war, carrying nearly six thousand cannon, and manned by fifty thousand men, sailors, soldiers, and gunners. Among these, forty are ships of the line, from sixty to one hundred and twenty guns, thirty-five frigates, one hundred and twenty gun-boats, of which last the greater part have been organised for the protection of the coast of Finland.

On all the seas which the Russians have reached they have launched ships: on the Baltic, on the Black Sea, the White Sea, the Caspian, and the Sea of Okhotsk. In the three latter, on account of their remoteness, and the little importance of their relations, the fleets are of course small, consisting only of a few frigates and brigs. The two chief fleets are stationed in the Baltic and the Black Sea, the latter increasing more and more in importance on account of the increasing importance of the affairs of Turkey. Nearly two thousand cannon float on the Black Sea in twelve line-of-battle ships, eight frigates, and some smaller vessels. Among these ships is the largest in the Russian navy—the *Warsaw*, carrying one hundred and twenty guns.

The Baltic fleet is still the most important: twenty-eight ships of the line form the nucleus, to which are attached a suitable number of frigates, corvettes, &c. In the number of ships and guns carried by them, this fleet has long been the most effective on the Baltic, and, indeed, doubles that of any other power there, both in number and equipment. The German powers, whose possessions border on the Baltic—Prussia, Mecklenburg, and Holstein—have no fleet there.\*

The Swedish fleet consists of one hundred vessels of war; of which ten are line-of-battle ships, and thirteen frigates, with a fleet of about three hundred sloops and gun-boats. The fleet of the guardians of the Sound, the Danes, that people of the island and the ship, consists at present of thirty large vessels, among which are six line-of-battle ships and six frigates, and seventy gun-boats. If we estimate the naval force on the Baltic by ships of the line, here are twenty-six Russian, and only sixteen not Russian. The Russian ships have now a coast line of three hundred German miles to defend. Before Alexander's time they had only one hundred and seventy miles, before Catherine's one hundred and twenty miles, in the time of Peter the Great not more than one hundred, and previous to that, *i.e.* one hundred and fifty years ago, they did not possess a single foot of coast. The English have contributed largely towards this increase of Russian naval power in the north as well as in the south. The destruction of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen by the English was an occurrence at which the Russians might rejoice as reasonably as at the battle of Navarino.

\* Why, it would be difficult to say. Prussia has timber for ship-building in abundance, has a merchant navy which may stand in need of protection, and a line of coast on the Baltic, relatively of much greater importance than that of Russia; and yet Prussia does not maintain there a single ship of war. In time of war she must allow herself quietly to be cut off from the sea, while Russia had a naval force

The Russian fleet, formed entirely after English and Dutch models, has nothing nationally characteristic. The technical terms are consequently Dutch or English, as those of the army are German. To landsmen, everything on board Russian vessels appears perfect and in the best order; even to those who saw them as Crawford did, there appears much that merits praise, but the learned in these matters see a great deal to find fault with, and many considerations induce them to undervalue the Russian navy, and think more lightly of its power. In the first place, the Russians are no sailors, but rather, as the English express it, regular land-lubbers. In this respect they are directly opposed to the English, Danes, Dutch, Greeks, and other maritime powers, who prefer the sea service to any other. Of all the nations inhabiting modern Russia, hardly one is acquainted with, or accustomed to, the sea. The actual Russians, those in the heart of the country, have nothing to do with the sea; the dwellers on the coast are everywhere colonists and strangers. Even of the maritime population few are familiar with the ocean. The Letts in Courland and Livonia ever held the "yure" (sea) in great dread; the Tartars of the south have always been shepherds, obtaining their foreign produce from foreign maritime nations, and the Cossacks never issued, except at intervals, from the interior of the country to make predatory excursions on the sea. The only exceptions are the Finns and Esthonians, who are esteemed good sailors; their long coast line, numerous lakes and archipelagoes, affording much practice. Hence the Finlanders are very numerous in the Russian navy.

With the scarcity of native seamen, the Russians were compelled to apply to foreigners for sailors, as the French, who were bad horsemen, were obliged to have recourse to the Germans to mount their cavalry.\* Russia has always sought to allure foreigners into her fleet; at first, Venetians, Dutch, and Germans, at a late period English, and in the southern seas Greeks. But these foreigners naturally rose to be heads and leaders, as they always do when serving with Russians; it was found impossible to keep them at the helm or the mast, where they were yet more necessary than in the higher posts. The wretched pay of the Russian mariner, which is not much higher than the soldier's, the severe discipline to which he is subjected, the contempt of foreigners for the lower class of Russians, and their consequent unwillingness to serve with them on equal terms, are circumstances which render a mingling of foreign and Russian sailors almost impossible. As the Russians did not become sailors through the natural effect of circumstances, or by their own will, but at the command of a master, there was nothing to be done but to select candidates for the sea, as they did for the land service, from the shepherds and husbandmen of the interior. Of the thirty thousand sailors now serving in the Russian fleet, at least twenty-four thousand have grown up at the plough and

\* To the natives of Alsace, Lorraine, &c.

spade, and but two thousand or three thousand at the utmost have served any kind of apprenticeship on the Black Sea, or in the fishing trade on the Northern and White Seas, and on the great rivers of the country.

Apart from the incompetent service of a Russian ship-of-war, which is a necessary consequence of the circumstances just mentioned, the entire want of a merchant navy is most unfavourable for the fleet. A commercial marine is the *corps de reserve* for the war service: its national guard or yeomanry. England, Denmark, North America, and almost all maritime nations, have had an important trading marine, which could not only supply them with experienced seamen, but also with ships-of-war, by furnishing them with guns and issuing letters of marque. The naval commerce of Russia is almost entirely passive. If all the Russian vessels in all the Russian harbours were reckoned together, they would certainly fall far short of a thousand. In war, therefore, Russia could only reckon on the ships built expressly for the purpose; and while the army is surrounded even to superfluity with the very effective Cossacks and other light troops, the sea Cossacks, the privateers, are altogether wanting. From all these circumstances, it is clearly incorrect to oppose the mere numbers of the Russian ships of the line and frigates to those of other nations when their relative strength is in question. In this respect, Russia stands in the same relation to Denmark, France, and Spain, as these powers do to England, and England again to North America, which in a naval war would be formidable to its enemies by its immense merchant navy, and by no means from the number of its ships-of-war.

As, on the other hand, the want of a commercial navy deprives Russia of its proper nursery for seamen, so, on the other, from this very want the whole object of the existence of a Russian fleet is different from that of others. It has no merchantmen to protect, nor distant colonies with which to keep up a communication. There are no convoys required; the snow and ice-fields that she possesses in North America, to which an expedition is made every three years, excepted, Russia has no colonies to visit, no commerce to protect in distant waters, against unexpected enemies or pirates.

The English, French, Dutch, and Danish fleets have constantly, even in the midst of a general peace, warlike business on their hands in distant parts of the globe; a blockade in America, an insult to their flag to avenge near Australia, pirates to chastise or slave-ships to take possession of. The Russian fleet has nothing but its yearly manœuvres on the Baltic and the Black Sea; hence the dexterity to be acquired by experience must be wanting. The fleets of other European powers have the whole ocean for their practice-field; the Russians have only two inland seas, nor even those in full measure, on account of the peculiar situation of the Russian harbours. Their climate is such that in the



Baltic ports, in the White Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, the fleets are compelled to remain inactive the greater part of the year. For six or eight months their vessels lie useless in their harbours; the time for practice in navigation is consequently very short, and the free disposal of their naval strength, in case of a war, much limited.

The relations of the southern ports of Astrakhan, Nikolayev, Odessa, Kherson, and Sevastopol, in reference to climate, are little more favourable; so that for the greater part of the year a Russian fleet may be looked upon as little better than an unavailable force, or a dead capital.

There is no other power in the world to which it is relatively so inordinately expensive to maintain a maritime force, notwithstanding the scanty pay of the seamen, nor any to whom it is relatively of so little advantage, as to Russia. Besides the above-mentioned causes for the excessive cost of the Russian navy, there are some peculiarities in the two chief ports which greatly tend to increase it; namely, the fresh water at Cronstadt, which makes the vessels decay rapidly; while in the salt water of Sevastopol there is a most pitiless foe, a small worm, which is rapidly and extensively destructive to ship-timber. It is asserted that, from these causes alone, the duration of a Russian ship is equal to only half that of a French or English vessel. If this last fact be correct, and it is admitted by a recent Russian traveller, who calls the worm "*teredo navalis*," two things must be certain: that the timbers of many Russian ships must be in a very unsound condition, and that their repairs must cost enormous sums. Undeniably, the great expense of Russia for her navy, other relations and circumstances considered, must be classed among the expenses of luxury. Taken at the minimum, the cost of repairs, equipment, &c. of three hundred and fifty ships, the pay of the fifty thousand sailors and marines, the maintenance of the harbours, twelve in number, of the seventeen hospital-stations for the fleet, and of the schools and institutions connected with the sea at St. Petersburg, Cronstadt, Nikolayev, Archangel, Kherson, and Odessa, must amount to a yearly sum of sixty millions of rubles. Within the last eleven years, the gross amount cannot be much short of seven hundred millions; that is, it has swallowed up sixteen times the revenue of Poland, while some expeditions to North America, and the transport of some troops to Constantinople and the Caucasus, excepted, nothing has been gained by it. A fleet is scarcely necessary to Russia under her present relations, and must be maintained with a view to the future. Russia must be keeping her fleet in readiness to occupy better ports when she gets them. When Russia is in possession of the Bosphorus and the Sound, her fleet will then become a necessity, will then obtain weight and significance in the state; at present it is nothing but a burden to the country, and perhaps the more dangerous to others on that very account, for Russia

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES.

AMONG the first things which strike a traveller in St. Petersburg are a kind of small towers, seen here and there over the tops of the houses. They are not very high, though sufficiently so to command a view over the quarter to which they belong; round, and pierced with rows of small windows, one above another, surrounded by a gallery, and surmounted by a multitude of iron rods and fastenings, the use of which is not very evident at first sight. These are the towers of the *Siashes*, or police stations, which serve as watch-towers against the two elements most formidable to St. Petersburg, fire and water. Day and night these galleries are paced by a couple of veterans wrapped in their sheepskins, who keep a vigilant look-out upon their quarter. The iron poles belong to a telegraphic apparatus, intended to announce the approach or the occurrence of danger to the police and the public.

To announce danger from the water they have red flags; for danger from fire (in the day) globular balls of black striped leather or sackcloth; and for fire by night, red-coloured lamps. Of every class of signs there are four pieces always at hand, which, arranged in various figures and constellations, indicate the quarter of the city threatened. Each part of the city has its peculiar figure. These four signs are amply sufficient for the twelve divisions of St. Petersburg, as they can be arranged in more than thirty different constellations, as thus:—

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0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	

The flags are dreaded above all, for St. Petersburg knows its weak side to be that turned towards the sea. About fire they concern themselves little; for if a St. Petersburgier were to get out of bed for every fire, he would scarcely ever have a quiet night. "I went to my window one evening in my house on the English quay," said a friend of mine once to me, "and saw a great fire somewhere. Where is that fire?" I inquired of my servant. "Oh, some houses are on fire on the Viborg side!" "But there is another!" "That is the galley harbour in flames!" "And from a third window I saw a third fire!" "That is the Winter Palace," said my servant. There is hardly a public building or a quarter in St. Petersburg that has not been at some time or other a prey to the flames. The carelessness of the people, the many stoves which must be heated through the greater part of the year, the numerous lamps kept burning day and night before the pictures of saints; and more than all, the immense quantity of wood used in building, are the causes of those frequent conflagrations. Petersburg has more wood, consequently more fires, than Berlin; Berlin more than Vienna, where stone is more in use. The Russian government is directing its attention to the transformation of St. Petersburg and other cities into stone; and this petrifying process has already made such progress in Moscow, that a second conflagration like that of 1812 would be impossible; if, therefore, another Napoleon came, he would be harder to drive out. The more Russia becomes civilised the easier will she be to attack from the west.

#### THE RASHTSHIKS.

A peculiar kind of artisans in St. Petersburg, and indeed in all Russian cities, are the sculptors in wood, or räshtshiks. It was to be expected that among the inhabitants of the immeasurable forests of Russia, a peculiar dexterity in wood-carving would develop itself. Many household utensils which with us are formed of clay or iron, are carved out of wood in Russia; such as pots, jugs, water-pitchers, &c. and many parts of the harness of a cart. For these things there are different places in Russia which supply them in large quantities; the räshtshiks\* in the towns work, generally, at the ornamental part of the interior of churches, and make frames for the pictures of saints, for which an enormous quantity of wood-carving is wanted.

While in every other kind of mechanical labour the Germans far surpass the Russians, and are so numerous in St. Petersburg that the native workmen cannot be compared to them, the räshtshiks are almost all Russians.

I visited Mr. Popugayeff, a well-known räshtshik, to examine

\* The word räshtshik comes from räsaty, to cut, and means literally a cutter. The Russians *understand* wood, as we do cloth or clothes, when we say cutter—cloth or clothes cutter: (Tuch or Kleider Schneider).

his stock and workshop. Mr. Popugayeff was a long-bearded old Russian, who wore his caftan exactly as his forefathers learnt of the Mongols to wear it five hundred years ago. When he saw that I was a German, he recommended me to his son, a young man of twenty, who undertook to explain everything to me. The young gentleman wore a frock-coat, and his hair *à la jeune France*, and spoke French and German. As both the antique father and the modern son were alike interesting to me, I requested them both to remain, which they willingly did. The father stroked his long beard, and related how he had come a poor "mushik" to St. Petersburg, and had risen from the humblest beginnings; the son settled his silken cravat, and informed me that they had forty workmen in their pay, and their establishment was the first in St. Petersburg. The father showed me the vine and flower-wreaths that he was carving in wood for the decoration of a church; the son interrupted him to show me a Venus and a Hercules, bespoken by some ambassador or other; the father pointed to a pair of gigantic "podsvetshniks" (church lamps), for the new Smolnoi Church, and the son to a couple of elegant candelabra after Italian models, and some garlands for rococo sofas, now in fashion in St. Petersburg. Both were equally zealous in their assurances that their "institution" was the first of its kind in the city, that it was known to the emperor, and that he had conferred on them a medal of honour some years before.

The drawings which the carvers made use of were very fair ones, and their dexterity in forming the whole figure from such flat pictures was really wonderful. Each of the workmen had a drawing before him, and worked upon the block of wood with chisel, knife, and hammer. Among the pieces of work executed by the workmen in their leisure hours were some extremely beautiful; for example, a bouquet of flowers of the most delicate kind, and ears of corn, with the beard most minutely fine; on one leaf a caterpillar was crawling, on another were perched a fly and a butterfly; all, even to the threadlike legs and feelers, cut in wood. The wood used is that of the lime-tree exclusively. Their gilding is altogether as bad as their carving is good. The rococo, which has been newly resuscitated from the archives of the cabinet-makers of the last century, has had, thanks to these rāstshiks, a wonderful success in Russia, where all the world were giving orders for rococo furniture.

From Mr. Popugayeff (Parrot's Son), I went to Mr. Sakharieff (Sugar Baker), and then to Mr. Pustūnin (Empty Head), all rāstshiks, and found everywhere the same arrangements; bearded fathers and Frenchified sons, gilded flower-wreaths and wooden statues. They all asserted their superiority in this branch of art to the Germans; but added there was one German who could work as they did with the chisel and knife, and that was a Mr. K—. I visited Mr. K—, who admitted that the matter stood as

the Russians had said, but that German gilding was much better, and there were many other "buts" besides. The chief demand for wood carving, he said, came from the Russian churches, where the natives had a double advantage; in the first place, from their better acquaintance with the priests, and secondly, from the thoughtlessness with which they undertook commissions, generally offered to him who undertook them on the lowest estimate. A German, who meant to do his work as well as possible, and who, in case of having made too low an estimate, could not help himself by means of connexion and intrigue, could never undertake a commission so cheaply as the Russian, and consequently rarely obtained one.

I begged Mr. K— to illustrate this by an example. "Oh! there are examples enough," said he. "But very lately there was a quantity of wood-carving wanted for a newly-built church. I made my calculation very exactly according to the plan laid down, the time in which the work must be finished, &c. and found I could not do it under twelve thousand rubles. A Russian offered to take the contract at seven thousand. It was given him, but he was not ready in time, and the consecration of the church had to be put off in consequence. Through the mediation of friends, not only the delay was excused, but he got the other five thousand rubles, under the pretence that a greater quantity of work had been required than was agreed for, and that it could not possibly be done for the sum bargained for. The work has scarcely been finished two years, and the gilding is tarnished already."

Everything in Russia is managed much in the same manner, and there are abundance of such stories of promise and non-performance.

#### THE RASNOSHTSHIKS (PEDLARS).

I know not whether it be the unquiet nomadic element mingled in the Russian blood, which does not allow any person or thing to be so stable and sedentary as in our more solid Germany, or whether it must be ascribed to the active spirit of speculation, which urges them to look on all sides for the best market for their wares; but it is certain that nowhere are there so many wandering merchants and artisans as in Russia. Perhaps the severity of the climate, which requires constant movement, has something to do with it. The enormous extent of the empire may also be a cause for this; for, in many instances, if the sellers did not go to the buyers their wares would not be bought at all. The suppleness and address of the Russians, who can turn all things to account, and are never to be found at a loss, render easy to them much that would be impossible to a German.

The Russians call these wandering traders *rasnoshtshiks*, or *prominshlenniks*. For this kind of commerce every Russian

has a decided talent, and adopts it more readily than any other. Peter the Great knew this well, when he advised the Jews not to come to Russia, where they would find their masters in the art of bargaining. Among the hundred nations that obey the Russian sceptre, the native of Great Russia, properly so called, is exclusively the travelling merchant, or pedlar, except in the Polish provinces, where the Jew is his rival.

As India has been conquered by English merchants, so has Siberia been conquered by the Russian pedlars, who, exploring by degrees these vast countries in the interest of their trade, not only first wound around them the bonds that were to unite them to Russia, but took up arms to assist in the incorporation. In the east and on the Persian frontier, in the south-west towards Moldavia and Wallachia, and in the extreme north of Lapland, the active and far-reaching *prominishlemniki*, are spinning the same threads.

The centre of Russian pedlaring, as of all other peculiarly Russian enterprises, is Moscow. The great manufacturing chiefs of that city are connected with multitudes of *rashnashbiks*, who have a certain amount of credit with them. Thus furnished, the trader mails his saint's picture to his one-horse telega, and sets out cheerfully to visit all parts of the known and the unknown world. Whole caravans of them are to be met with, traversing the empire in every direction, with their carts decked out with saints' pictures and the herbs of the steppes. They cross the Black Sea to the Tartars, though these are but poor customers, pass the Caucasian chain, traverse Siberia, and seek gain at the very foot of the Chinese wall. Persia is not too hot for them, nor Kamtschatka too cold, when the clink of the silver ruble is heard. If the market among the barbarians is not profitable, they hasten across the Lena, the Yenisei, and the Obi, to the Baltic and St. Petersburg. What they cannot get rid of there, they carry among the "swamp people," as the Finns call themselves, and return at last to Moscow, after two or three years' absence, to pay their creditor, who, in the mean time, probably, has never heard a syllable of them.

We western Europeans cleave to our rocks and mountains: but the pulses of Russian life beat on immeasurable plains around the whole circumference of the globe; for between the Russian-American possessions and the islands of the icy Sea, there remains but a small space to complete the circle. Whilst we Germans sometimes feel ourselves strange a few miles from our native soil, the Russian is at home everywhere in his vast native land; and it is all one to him whether he earn his bread under the parallel of Constantinople, or on the shores of the Polar Sea. It would be a great mistake to suppose the numerous street population of the Russian cities all natives of the place. They come together from all parts of the north and south, to disperse again to the east and west.

the Russians had said, but that German gilding was much better, and there were many other "buts" besides. The chief demand for wood carving, he said, came from the Russian churches, where the natives had a double advantage; in the first place, from their better acquaintance with the priests, and secondly, from the thoughtlessness with which they undertook commissions, generally offered to him who undertook them on the lowest estimate. A German, who meant to do his work as well as possible, and who, in case of having made too low an estimate, could not help himself by means of connexion and intrigue, could never undertake a commission so cheaply as the Russian, and consequently rarely obtained one.

I begged Mr. K— to illustrate this by an example. "Oh! there are examples enough," said he. "But very lately there was a quantity of wood-carving wanted for a newly-built church. I made my calculation very exactly according to the plan laid down, the time in which the work must be finished, &c. and found I could not do it under twelve thousand rubles. A Russian offered to take the contract at seven thousand. It was given him, but he was not ready in time, and the consecration of the church had to be put off in consequence. Through the mediation of friends, not only the delay was excused, but he got the other five thousand rubles, under the pretence that a greater quantity of work had been required than was agreed for, and that it could not possibly be done for the sum bargained for. The work has scarcely been finished two years, and the gilding is tarnished already."

Everything in Russia is managed much in the same manner, and there are abundance of such stories of promise and non-performance.

#### THE RASNOSHTSHIKS (PEDLARS).

I know not whether it be the unquiet nomadic element mingled in the Russian blood, which does not allow any person or thing to be so stable and sedentary as in our more solid Germany, or whether it must be ascribed to the active spirit of speculation, which urges them to look on all sides for the best market for their wares; but it is certain that nowhere are there so many wandering merchants and artisans as in Russia. Perhaps the severity of the climate, which requires constant movement, has something to do with it. The enormous extent of the empire may also be a cause for this; for, in many instances, if the sellers did not go to the buyers their wares would not be bought at all. The suppleness and address of the Russians, who can turn all things to account, and are never to be found at a loss, render easy to them much that would be impossible to a German.

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In no city is this more the case than in St. Petersburg, in whose streets all the governments find representatives, and whither dealers and artisans of all kinds flock in multitudes.

In every household there are a multitude of breakable commodities standing in constant need of repair. In all Russian towns artisans of all kinds are roaming about to supply this constantly recurring necessity; which is the easier done, because their manual dexterity enables them to do nearly as much with a mere hatchet as can be accomplished elsewhere with hammer, plane, knife, and chisel. Wandering coopers, smiths, tailors, and shoemakers, are ready at a call to hoop, hammer, and patch; even glaziers risk their fragile materials in the streets for the chance of a trifling profit.

The loudest scream is that of the flower-merchants, who carry their wares about in pots, placed slantingly on a board upon their heads; dealers in singing-birds traverse the streets, hung with cages from head to foot; while others are perfectly laden with boots, stockings, and gloves. Almost every cry announces some branch of industry from distant parts of the mighty empire, whereas our street calls have reference only to the neighbourhood. "Sfapogi Kasanskiyi" (boots from Kasan), "Kartini Moskovskiya" (pictures from Moscow), "Khalati Bukhorskiya" (Tartar dressing-gowns). The Mongolians and Tartars are distinguished for their skill in the preparation of leather, and almost every branch of manufacture connected with this article in Russia has had its origin from them; as the gold and silver embroidered caps and girdles of Moscow; the richly-adorned Morocco boots for morning wear at Kasan, which are in use throughout Russia, and are also exported. Dressing-gowns are almost the only things that do not come through Russian hands, but from those of the Tartar makers. Their "khalati" are generally their only merchandisc, and for them alone they come to St. Petersburg, where they are often called "dressing-gown Tartars." Certainly the Tartar or Bokharian gowns are the most perfect things of the kind. The price is moderate, the pattern of the silk extremely beautiful, the cut very elegant, and the colours lasting; they are of the few articles of dress that are always in fashion. The dressing-gown Tartars may be distinguished at a glance from the rest of the street population of St. Petersburg by their cleanliness of apparel, carefully trimmed beards, shorn heads, and serious, anxious physiognomy.

None of the rasmoshtshiks deal in a more current article than the picture-dealers of Moscow. The Russian delights to decorate his dwelling with all sorts of gaily-coloured pictures. The *ka-baks* (spirit-shops), the sitting-rooms of the lower classes, the little cabins of the river barges, often even the inside of the sledges and *kibitkis*, are plastered over with pictures, coloured paper, and patches of gay-looking carpet. The chief manufactory of these articles is Moscow, whence they issue to all parts of the

#### CONSECRATION OF A HOUSE.

empire. These pictures may be divided into three classes, religious, political, and æsthetic. The religious are the oldest, the most peculiarly Russian, and the most universally favoured. They represent all the scenes and subjects that constantly busy the fancy of a Russian: heaven with its happiness, hell with its torments, the seven universal churches, with their hundred sacred cupolas and towers, the twelve most celebrated convents of Russia, all on one sheet; Moscow the Holy with its thousand churches; then the moral satiric pictures, such as the "gold devil" scattering money among the people, and dazzling and seducing all classes; the devil of love, and the devil of vanity, mocking and leading by the nose men and women of all ages; then the holy martyrs assisting the poor and sick, and bearing with patience the greatest torments in their own persons. All these objects are depicted with great liveliness of fancy and colouring, and in the greatest detail.

The political pictures all take for their subjects the beloved persons of their emperors, and illustrate a number of anecdotes relative to them. The Emperor Peter, when, on the Lake of Ladoga, he seized the helm of the little vessel, and called to the affrighted boatmen, "Courage, my brethren; did you ever hear of an emperor drowned in a puddle?" The Emperor Peter putting on the imperial crown; Alexander trying to restore to life the peasant found frozen to death in Lithuania; Nicholas wrapped in his simple mantle, in an ordinary Russian troika (a carriage with three horses), in which he drives through his empire; or with his son Constantine on his lap, in a small boat with his consort; the heir to the imperial crown as he attends his father at a review. There is a positive cyclüs of such scenes, as current as the stamped coin of the realm, and continually re-appearing in the same form and manner, and making part and parcel of the national life.

The æsthetic pictures are mere imitations of foreign productions sent from Vienna, Paris, and Berlin, to Moscow, where they are immediately *translated* into Russian; that is, quickly imitated, furnished with Russian inscriptions, and sold at a low price to the *rasnoshtshiks*, who disperse them throughout the world. The pretty face of the Queen of England, and the beard of Louis Philippe, are thus made known on the other side of the Caucasus. Napoleon's portrait is as common as among us, and all the remarkable events connected with that mighty apparition are variously presented in these pictures to the Russian people.

#### CONSECRATION OF A HOUSE.

I was one day passing a window round which many persons were crowding, and found that the house, which belonged to a tobacconist, was to be consecrated. As I knew something of the owner, I entered the doorway, and was immediately invited to

enter and "assist" at the ceremony. He had had his business in another street, and was now removing and extending it. All was as bright as new silver in his establishment: the counters and sofas were of highly-polished mahogany; the beds in the farther chambers made up and decorated, but as yet unslept in: in the front shop, parcels of tobacco, chests of cigars, and other wares, were arranged in the best order; the weights and scales were all ready and as bright as gold; but not an ounce of anything had yet been sold.

A large party of guests in gala dresses filled the rooms; some friends and relations of the merchant, bowing and crossing themselves, marched after a party of priests in full pontificalibus. Every tobacco-box and cigar-chest, every divan, table, and chair, every corner, doorway, wall, and window, was visited, blessed, and sprinkled, the officiating priests singing and swinging the censers all the time. The whole ended with a feast; and the merriment was still going on at the back of the house when the business began in the front, while the blessing was yet warm and fresh.

#### RIVER SHIPPING.

The little St. Petersburg gondolas that navigate the Neva have a broad and low prow, and a high-pointed stern. A more important class of vessels than the gondolas are the great *struse* fleets which come to St. Petersburg in summer from the interior. There are among them Volga, Kama, Ladoga, Dwina, and Volchoff ships, with which rivers, owing to an extensive system of canals, St. Petersburg is in constant intercourse.

The peculiar build of all these vessels, which pass under the general name of *struse*, is this: they are enormously large, and so little labour is wasted on their construction, that they look more like productions of nature than of art. The basis of them is the large trunk of the pine, of which the strongest side branches are left, and serve as ribs to the boat. The planks that cover those ribs are smoothed merely with the hatchet, and made fast with strong wooden pegs. The lading is covered with a roof formed of a young birch-tree, on which all the branches are left, and over this a tarpawling is sometimes thrown. Round the edge of this roof a kind of gallery runs for the convenience of the crew. The cabin of the master, made of planks roughly nailed together, and decorated with pieces of gaudy carpet and pictures of saints, is placed in the middle of the ship, dividing it thus into two parts. A pine-stem forms the mast, and supports an enormous sail, and two other pine-stems placed fore and aft are the rudders, which are generally longer than the mast. That at the prow is often grotesquely painted in all colours, with long stripes, crosses, and stars, like the hem of Iris's garment, or the tail of a peacock; and by the arrangement of these colours it is that the birthplace of the bark is known.

The *struses* arrive by hundreds and thousands every summer; the fleets or caravans, as the Russians call them, have each their appointed time for leaving their places of rendezvous in the interior; the "salt caravan" at one time, the "iron caravan" at another; the greater part remain at St. Petersburg. Not more than six or eight hundred return with a cargo, the others are broken up for fuel; many get frozen in before they are broken up, and in the course of the winter are gradually stripped of their planks, leaving their skeleton sides erect amid the snow and ice on the banks of the Neva.

## PICKPOCKETS.

The French ambassador was one day vaunting the dexterity of the Parisian thieves to one of the grand-dukes, and related many anecdotes of their address. The grand-duke was of opinion that the St. Petersburg thieves were quite their equals; and offered to lay a wager that, if the ambassador would dine with him the next day, he would cause his excellency's watch, signet ring, or any other articles of his dress which he thought most secure, to be stolen from him before the dessert was over. The ambassador accepted the wager, and the grand-duke sent immediately to the chief of the police, desiring him to send the adroitest thief he might happen to have in custody at the time. The man was dressed in livery, instructed what to do, and promised a pardon if he accomplished his task well. The ambassador had named his watch as the particular object of attention, both for himself and the thief; when he had got the watch the supposed servant was to give the grand-duke a sign.

The dinner began, the preliminary whet, the soups, and the rôti, came and disappeared in their turns; the red, white, Greek, Spanish, and French wines sparkled successively in the glasses of the guests. The ambassador kept close guard on his watch, and the grand-duke, observing his earnest anxiety, smiled with good-humoured archness. The pretended lacquey was busily assisting in the removal of the dishes, the dinner was nearly over, and the prince awaited with impatience the expected signal. Suddenly his countenance brightened; he turned to the ambassador, who was deep in conversation with his neighbour, and asked him what was the hour. His excellency triumphantly put his hand to his pocket, he had had it on his watch a few minutes before, and to the amusement of all, but particularly of the grand-duke, drew out a very neatly cut turnip! A general laugh followed. The ambassador, somewhat embarrassed, would take a pinch of snuff, and felt in all his pockets for his gold snuff-box: it was gone! The laughter became louder; the ambassador in his embarrassment and vexation had recourse to his seal ring, to turn it as he was accustomed: it was gone! In short, he found that he had been regularly plundered of everything but what had been fas-

tened on him by the tailor and the shoemaker: of ring, watch, snuff-box, handkerchief, toothpick, and gloves. The adroit rogue was brought before him, and commanded by the grand-duke to give back the stolen property; when, to the great surprise of the prince, the pickpocket took out *two* watches, and presented one to the ambassador and one to his imperial highness; two rings, one for the ambassador and one for the grand-duke; two snuff-boxes, &c. In astonishment, his highness now felt in his pockets as the ambassador had done, and found that he too had been stripped of his moveables in a like manner. The grand-duke solemnly assured the ambassador that he had been quite unconscious of the theft, and was disposed at first to be angry with the too dexterous artist. However, upon second thoughts, the fellow who had enabled him to win his wager so triumphantly was dismissed with a present, and a warning to employ his talents in future to more useful purposes.

#### OFFICE FOR FOREIGNERS.

In the first few days of my stay in St. Petersburg, I had occasion to visit the Alien-office several times. It is, undeniably, one of the most interesting offices in the city. Its destination is inscribed upon its brow in four different languages. The officers are exceedingly polite, and generally address you in your native language. In the ante-chamber persons are stationed to take the cloak or furred coat, and give tickets in exchange as at a club. The halls of audience are large and airy, as they are in all public offices in Russia, whose roomy buildings bear the same relation to our murky dens, in point of size, as the Russian empire does to our kingdoms.

As every foreigner must present himself in person to obtain and renew his certificate of permission to reside, a very interesting society is generally to be found here, and one has an opportunity of becoming acquainted with every stranger in St. Petersburg. Here sit the English grumbling and cursing more than all at the countless inquiries of the Russian police; Germans, who take it more patiently, and give contentedly the required guarantees, certificates, and signatures; governesses answering the many questions put to them in fear and trembling; old ladies who, in their eightieth year, must talk about their birth, and say when and where and how they came into this world; merchants, the quietest and most loyal people in the world, and intent only on getting money, and yet who are required to give security for their political sentiments; honest German artisans questioned and cross-questioned like suspected criminals; but all, as I said before, in the politest manner possible. It is to be remarked also, that everything issuing from these officials has the smoothest exterior. Paper, writing, sealing, typographical arrangement, and even the style of the passports, permissions to reside, certificates,

and testimonials, which the Russian authorities issue, are better and more tasteful in appearance than with us. Ours smack of the dismal locality whence they emanate, and still bear the stamp of the middle ages; in Russia all these things are in the newest fashion.

#### IRON ROOFS.

Among the various architectural superiorities in which the cities of Russia rejoice, may be enumerated the manner in which their roofs bid defiance to Jupiter Pluvius. Till very lately, Russia, like Germany, was sheltered under thatch, tiles, and slates; but since whole mountains of iron have been discovered on the estates of the Demidoffs and the Jakovleffs, this metal is used more and more as a shield against the attacks of rain and hail. The manner of construction is this:—large plates of iron are laid upon the rafters, lapping over each other, and soldered together at the edges. On the sides of the rafters they are made fast, but nowhere else; in other respects, the whole roof rests loosely upon the house. Holes pierced for nails are found to diminish the durability. These roofs are commonly painted green. As a frequent renewal of this paint is necessary to the preservation of the roof, they have usually a bright and new appearance. These iron roofs last more than twice as long as tiles, and do not cost twice as much (the duration of one is reckoned at twenty, the other at fifty years). The iron roofs, moreover, are lighter than any other. In case of fire, however, they are more dangerous, as they heat sooner, and are more difficult to remove. All the Russian iron roofs are inclined at a very slight angle, and indeed look almost flat like the Italian roofs. In summer, moreover, they are as hot as the piombi of Venice, and in winter as cold as an ice cave among the glaciers: yet in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and all the chief cities of European Russia, except the Polish and German cities, and even in the new towns of Siberia, the greater part of the better houses (those belonging to the government always) are provided with these convenient, elegant, flat green roofs.

#### THE FATHER OF THE RUSSIAN FLEET.

The little boat which Peter the Great assisted to build with his own hands for the purpose of navigating the Neva during the building of St. Petersburg and of his larger vessels: that little reed first cast by him upon the waters of the Baltic, which has since made so usurious a return: this Father of the Russian Fleet, as it is called in St. Petersburg, lies in the fortress under a small hut. It is well done of the Russians to honour and preserve it; well done that, when it is brought from its abiding-place, it should be saluted by the thunder of the whole fleet, as when a prince shows himself to his people; but it is very ill done to paint, renew, and furbish up this relic as they do. They have planed and

whitened away the old soil left by Peter's hands; they have removed the old copper that Peter himself nailed on, and put some that is bright and clean in its place: there is nothing dusty or old-looking about it.

The vessel is thirty feet long, eight feet broad, and can spread three sails. In the stern of the vessel is an image carved in wood, representing a long-bearded Russian pope stretching out his hand over the sea, blessing and consecrating it, that it may bear the Russian fleet, typified in some rude carvings of ships leaving the harbour.

#### VAPOUR BATHS.

On Saturday evening an unusual movement may be seen among the lower classes in St. Petersburg. Whole companies of poor soldiers, who have got a temporary furlough, troops of mechanics and labourers, whole families, men, women, and children, are eagerly traversing the streets with towels under their arms, and birch-twigs in their hands. From the zeal and haste manifested in their movements they would seem to be engaged on important business, as in fact they are, the most important and agreeable of the whole week. They are going to the public bath, to forget, in the enjoyment of its vapours, the sufferings of the past week, to make supple the limbs stiffened with past toil, and invigorate them for that which is to come. The Russians are such lovers of vapour baths that Petersburg contains an immense number of these establishments. Those for the poor are mostly in the suburbs. Before the door the words "entrance to the baths," in large letters, invite the eye; within the door-way, so narrow that only one at a time can work his way in, sits the money-taker, who exchanges a ticket for the bath for a few copeks, and has generally a whole sackful of large copper coin by his side. Near him sit a couple of women selling "schnaps" and kalatshi, while the people are thronging in and out as at a theatre. The plotniks, who make a holiday at an earlier hour on Saturday that they may not lose their bath; the servants and coachmen who have been lucky enough to get leave from their masters; the poor worried soldier, to whom this joy is sweeter than to all, because it falls so seldom to his share; men, women, boys, girls, all hurry to secure their tickets, as if they were proceeding to some favourite show.

Let us also take one and follow them to see what is going on. In general the passage is divided into two parts behind the check-taker's post, one for the male and one for the female guests. the bathing-houses, for the peasants in the country, the bath is often in common for both sexes, and some travellers maintain that the same thing takes place in St. Petersburg. I can only say I have visited many, and always found the baths for the sexes divided from one another.

We first enter an open space, in which a number of men are

sitting in a state of nudity on benches, all dripping with water and perspiration, and as red as lobsters, breathing deep, sighing, puffing, and gossiping, and busily employed in drying themselves and dressing. These have already bathed, and now in a glow of pleasurable excitement are puffing and blowing like Tritons in the sea. Even in the winter I have seen these people, all melting from the hot bath, drying and dressing in the open air, or at most in a sort of booth forming an out-house to the baths. Round it are the doors leading to the bathing-rooms, large wooden apartments, in which a heat of 40° to 50° (Reaumur) is maintained. A thick cloud of vapour conceals at first what is going on within: for nothing is at first visible but the feeble glimmer of the lamps, breaking through a thick atmosphere, and the flame of the heated ovens. To remain here clothed is evidently impossible, neither would it be advisable for a well-dressed person to risk an appearance here as a mere spectator. I entered, therefore, in the costume of nature, in which we are as much alike as one egg is like another. In any other costume the naked people would infallibly have ejected me speedily. Under this disguise I pursued my observations unmolested, the bath being by no means my object.

When the door is opened, as before observed, no object is at first visible. The vapour is raised by the entrance of the cold air with the new comer, which makes that visible which, existing before in a half gaseous state, was nearly transparent. In winter one must enter like Jupiter to Semele, in clouds and tempest; the cold atmosphere brought by the new comer freezing the vapour within, and causing it to descend in flakes of snow.

The sensation at first is very singular. There are a number of persons, from fifty to a hundred, employed apparently in the most extraordinary manner in the world: namely, in inflicting torture on themselves. On the platforms, raised in the form of an amphitheatre, lie a number of bodies on their backs or stomachs; if not dead, they certainly seem struggling with death; for the air they are breathing can only serve to stifle. Other persons, their tormentors, are employed in scourging them with birchen rods, steeped in cold water, as if to increase the smart. Here and there a father is holding his little boy between his knees, and diligently employed in flogging him. Others are standing by the glowing stoves, as if they wished to be roasted, and others again, descending from the upper platforms, steaming at every pore, have ice-cold water poured over them by the painful, of which there are tanks at hand for the purpose.

A man may fancy himself entering a place of penance, and take the people, if not for victims of persecution, as they seem willing sufferers, at least for martyrs to some fixed idea or some finical extravagance. But what will a stranger think when he questions the men, and hears them all protest they are delighted with their discipline, and as comfortable as fish in water?



## PANORAMA OF ST. PETERSBURG.

Any one, however, who can overcome the first impression, who can accustom his lungs to swallow fire, and will place himself upon a bench, and yield to the languor inevitably resulting from inordinate perspiration, will soon be enabled to solve the enigma. In the baths I am describing I did not experience this enjoyment, for they were too disgusting to tempt me to join in the delights of the place; but in the more elegant establishments, of which there are many in St. Petersburg, and where everything, ante-chamber, dressing-rooms, and baths, are perfect in their kind, I have often experienced it. The pleasurable sensation is felt when the first disagreeable effect of the heat is overcome, and the transpiration commences in full activity. Then the beneficent spirit of warmth pervades the whole frame, a divine sense of pleasure is all that remains to us of our existence, our whole being seems dissolved in fleeting vapour; all pain, all stiffness, vanishes from the limbs; we feel light and buoyant as feathers. The rubbing and flogging with birchen twigs increases the transpiration, and consequently the enjoyment. All bodily pain, be it what it may, disappears in these baths; of headache, tooth-ache, cramps, convulsion in the limbs or face, gout and rheumatism, not a trace remains. It is an extraordinary excitement, a kind of intoxication of the whole nervous system. Of course it is not asserted that the Russian baths are a radical cure for all those disorders, for many pains return with increased violence afterwards; but it is certain that, while in the bath, and for some hours afterwards, every person feels himself totally free from suffering, and hence we may easily comprehend the extraordinary fondness of the Russians for this kind of intoxication. By one of these baths a man is washed out like a sponge: not only the skin is washed, but the heart, stomach, liver and lungs, seem cleansed by the torrent of evaporation. For a sensual people, I can imagine no higher enjoyment. The Russians of all ranks and ages are so accustomed to the use of these baths that they feel unwell when obliged to dispense with them for any length of time; and the poor soldier, fettered by the severity of discipline, will complain that he has not been able to enjoy the bath for a month, with as compassion-asking an air as if he had undergone the pangs of hunger for as long a period.

THE END.





